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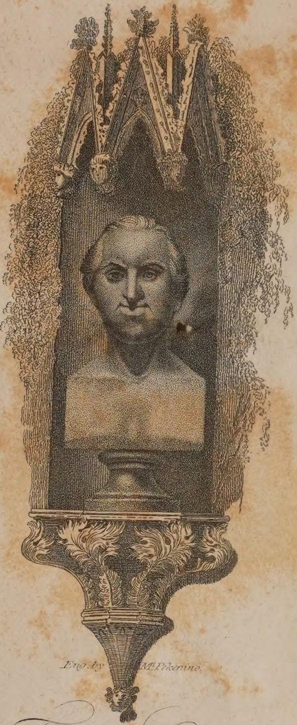

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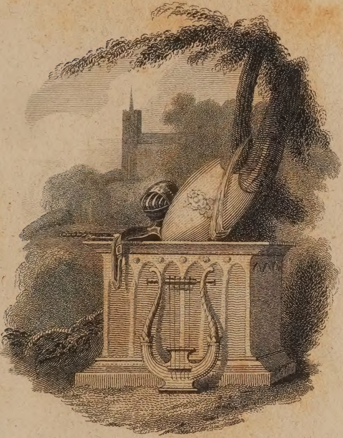
Thomas Gray.

POEMS

BY

Thomas Gray.



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GRAY'S

LETTERS & POEMS,

WITH A

Life of the Author.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY W. A. BARTOW.
John Gray & Co. Print.

1827.

THE LIFE

OF

THOMAS GRAY.

THOMAS GRAY was born in Cornhill, in the city of London, on the 26th of December, 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was a money-scrivener, but being of an indolent and profuse disposition, he rather diminished than improved his paternal fortune. Our author received his classical education at Eton school, under Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, a man of sound learning and refined taste, who directed his nephew to those pursuits which laid the foundation of his future literary fame.

During his continuance at Eton, he contracted a friendship with Mr. Horace Walpole, well known for his knowledge in the fine arts; and Mr. Richard West, son of the lord chancellor of Ireland, a youth of very promising talents.

When he left Eton school in 1734, he went to Cambridge, and entered a pensioner at Peterhouse, at the recommendation of his uncle Antrobus, who had been a fellow of that college. It is said that, from his effeminacy and fair complexion, he acquired, among his fellow students, the appellation of *Miss* Gray, to which the delicacy of his manners seems not a little to have contributed. Mr. Walpole was at that time a fellow commoner of King's College, in the same university; a fortunate circumstance, which afforded Gray frequent opportunities of intercourse with his honourable friend.

Mr. West went from Eton to Christ Church, Oxford; and in this state of separation, these two votaries of the muses, whose dispositions were congenial, commenced an epistolary correspondence, part of which is published by Mr. Mason, a gentleman whose character stands high in the republic of letters.

Gray, having imbibed a taste for poetry, did not relish those abstruse studies which generally occupy the minds of students at college; and therefore, as he found very little gratification from academical pursuits, he left Cambridge in 1738, and returned to London, intending to apply himself to the study of the law; but this intention was soon laid aside, upon an invitation given him by Mr. Walpole, to accompany him in his travels abroad; a situation highly preferable, in Gray's opinion, to the dry study of the law.

They set out together for France and visited most of the places worthy of notice in that country: from thence they proceeded to Italy, where an unfortunate dispute taking place between them, a separation ensued upon their arrival at Florence. Mr. Walpole, afterwards, with great candour and liberality took upon himself the blame of the quarrel; though, if we consider the matter coolly and impartially, we may be induced to conclude that Gray, from a conscious superiority of ability, might have claimed a deference to his opinion and judgment, which his honourable friend was not at that time disposed to admit: the rupture, however, was very unpleasant to both parties.

Gray pursued his journey to Venice on an economic plan, suitable to the circumscribed state of his finances, and having continued there some weeks, returned to England in September, 1741. He appears, from his letters, published by Mr. Mason, to have paid the minutest attention to every object, worthy of notice, throughout the course of his travels. His descriptions are lively and picturesque, and bear particular marks of his genius and disposition. We admire the sublimity of his ideas when he ascends the stupendous heights of the Alps, and are charmed with his display of nature, decked in all the beauties of vegetation. Indeed, abundant information, as well as entertainment, may be derived from his casual letters.

In about two months after his arrival in England, he lost his father, who, by an indiscreet profusion, had so impaired his fortune, as not to admit of his son's prosecuting the study of the law with that degree of respectability which the nature of the profession requires, without becoming burdensome to his mother and aunt. To obviate, therefore, their importunities on the subject he went to Cambridge, and took his bachelor's degree in civil law.

But the inconveniences and distress attached to a scanty fortune, were not the only ills our poet had to encounter at this time: he had not only lost the friendship of Mr. Walpole abroad, but poor West the partner of his heart, fell a victim to complicated maladies, brought on by family misfortunes, on the 1st of June, 1742, at Popes, a village, in Hertfordshire, where he went for the benefit of the air.

The excessive degree in which his mind was agitated for the loss of his friend, will best appear from the following beautiful little sonnet:

"In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
  And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
  Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine:
  A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely-anguish melts no heart but mine,
  And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
  And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
  To warm their little loves the birds complain;
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear;
  And weep the more, because I weep in vain."

Mr. Gray now seems to have applied his mind very sedulously to poetical composition: his *Ode to Spring* was written early in June, to his friend Mr. West, before he received the melancholy news of his death: how our poet's susceptible mind was affected by that melancholy incident, is evidently demonstrated by the lines quoted above; the impression, indeed, appears to have been too deep to be soon effaced; and the tenor of the subjects which called for the exertions of his poetical talents subsequent to the production of this Ode, corroborates that observation; these were his *Prospect of Eton*, and his *Ode to Adversity*. It is also supposed, and with great probability, that he began his *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* about the same time. He passed some weeks at Stoke, near Windsor, where his mother and aunt resided, and in that pleasing retirement finished several of his most celebrated poems.

From thence he returned to Cambridge, which, from this period, was his chief residence during the remainder of his life. The conveniences with which a college life was attended, to a person of his narrow fortune, and studious turn of mind, were more than a compensation for the dislike which, for several reasons, he bore to the place: but he was perfectly reconciled to his situation, on Mr. Mason's being elected a fellow of Pembroke-Hall; a circumstance which brought him a companion, who, during life retained for him the highest degree of friendship and esteem.

In 1742 he was admitted to the degree of bachelor in the civil law, as appears from a letter written to his particular friend Dr. Wharton, of Old Park, near Durham, formerly fellow of Pembroke-Hall, Cambridge, in which he ridicules, with much point and humour, the follies and foibles, and the dulness and formality, which prevailed in the university.

In order to enrich his mind with the ideas of others, he devoted a considerable portion of his time to the study of the best Greek authors; so that in the course of six years, there were hardly any writers of eminence in that language whose works he had not only read but thoroughly digested.

His attention, however, to the Greek classics, did not wholly engross his time; for he found leisure to advert, in a new sarcastical manner, to the ignorance and dullness with which he was surrounded, though situated in the centre of learning.

In 1744 he seems to have given up his attention to the Muses, Mr. Walpole, desirous of preserving what he had already written, as well as perpetuating the merit of their deceased friend, West, endeavoured to prevail with Gray, to whom he had previously become reconciled, to publish his own poems, together with those of West; but Gray declined it, conceiving their productions united would not suffice to fill even a small volume.

In 1747 Gray became acquainted with Mr. Mason, then a scholar of St. John's College, and afterwards fellow of Pembroke-hall. Mr. Mason, who was a man of great learning and ingenuity, had written, the year before, his "Monody on the Death of Pope," and his "Il Bellicoso," and "Il Pacifico:" and Gray revised these pieces at the request of a friend. This laid the foundation of a friendship that terminated but with life: and Mr. Mason, after the death of Gray, testified his regard for him, by superintending the publication of his works.

The same year he wrote a little Ode on the Death of a favourite Cat of Mr. Walpole's, in which humour and instruction are happily blended, but the following year he produced an effort of much more importance; the fragment of an *Essay on the Alliance of Education and Government.* Its tendency was to demonstrate the necessary concurrence of both to form great and useful men.

In 1750 he put the finishing stroke to his *Elegy written in a Country Church-yard*, which was communicated first to his friend Mr. Walpole, and by him to many persons of rank and distinction. This beautiful production introduced the author to the favour of lady Cobham, and gave occasion to a singular composition, called *A Long Story;* in which various effusions of wit and humour are very happily interspersed.

The Elegy having found its way into the "Magazine of Magazines," the author wrote to Mr. Walpole, requesting he would put it into the hands of Mr. Dodsley, and order him to print it immediately, in order to rescue it from the disgrace it might have incurred by its appearance in a magazine. The Elegy was the most popular of all our author's productions; it ran through eleven editions, and was translated into Latin by Anstey and Roberts; and in the same year a version of it was published by Lloyd. Mr. Bently, an eminent artist of that time, wishing to decorate this elegant composition with every ornament of which it is so highly deserving, drew for it a set of designs, as he also did for the rest of Gray's productions, for which the artist was liberally repaid by the author in some beautiful stanzas, but unfortunately no perfect copy of them remains. The following, however, are given as a specimen.

"In silent gaze the tuneful choir among,
Half pleased, half blushing, let the muse admire,
While Bently leads her sister art along,
And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

See, in their course, each transitory thought,
Fixed by his touch, a lasting essence take;
Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,
To local symmetry and life awake!

The tardy rhymes, that used to linger on,
To censure cold, and negligent of fame;
In swifter measures animated run,
And catch a lustre from his genuine flame.

Ah! could they catch his strength, his easy grace,
His quick creation, his unerring line;
The energy of Pope they might efface,
And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.

But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inspiration given,
That burns in Shakspeare's or in Milton's page,
The pomp and prodigality of Heaven.

As when conspiring in the Diamond's blaze,
The meaner gems, that singly charm the sight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
And dazzle with a luxury of light.

Enough for me; if, to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy impart,
And as their pleasing influence flows confessed,
A sigh of soft reflection heave the heart."

It appears, by a letter to Dr. Wharton, that Gray finished his Ode on the *Progress of Poetry* early in 1755, the *Bard* was also begun about the same time; and the following beautiful Fragment on the *Pleasure arising from Vicissitude* the next year. The merit of the two former pieces was not immediately perceived, nor generally acknowledged. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Lloyd and Colman wrote, in concert, two Odes to "Oblivion" and "Obscurity," in which they were ridiculed with much ingenuity.

"Now the golden morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft,
She woos the tardy spring;
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground,
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintery trance,
The birds his presence greet;
But chief the skylark warbles high
His trembling, thrilling ecstasy;

And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
The herd stood drooping by,
Their raptures now, that wildly flow,
No yesterday nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past misfortune's brow
Soft reflection's hand can trace,
And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
A melancholy grace:
While hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower,
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still where rosy pleasure leads,
See a kindred grief pursue,
Behind the steps that misery treads
Approaching comfort view;
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of wo;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of Pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again.

The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

Our author's reputation, as a poet, was so high that, on the death of Colley Cibber, in 1757, he had the honour of refusing the office of poet-laureat, to which he was probably induced by the disgrace brought upon it through the inability of some who had filled it.

His curiosity some time after drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the British Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing.

In 1762, on the death of Mr. Turner, professor of modern languages and history at Cambridge, he was, according to his own expression, "cockered and spirited up" to apply to lord Bute for the succession. His lordship refused him with all the politeness of a courtier, the office having been previously promised to Mr. Brocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His health being on the decline, in 1765, he undertook a journey to Scotland, conceiving he should derive benefit from exercise and change of situation. His account of that country, as far as it extends, is curious and elegant; for as his mind was comprehensive, it was employed in the contemplation of all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events.

During his stay in Scotland, he contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, in whom he found, as he himself expresses it, a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. Through the intervention of his friend the doctor, the Marischal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of doctor of laws, which he thought it decent to decline, having omitted to take it at Cambridge.

In December, 1767, Dr. Beattie, still desirous that his country should leave a memento of its regard to the merit of our poet, solicited his permission to print, at the University of Glasgow, an elegant edition of his works. Gray could not comply with his friend's request, as he had given his promise to Mr. Dodsley. However, as a compliment to them both, he presented them with a copy, containing a few notes, and the imitations of the old Norwegian poetry, intended to supplant the Long Story, which was printed at first to illustrate Mr. Bently's designs.

In 1768, our author obtained that office without solicitation, for which he had before applied without effect. The professorship of languages and history again became vacant, and he received an offer of it from the duke of Grafton, who had succeeded lord Bute in office. The place was valuable in itself, the salary being 400l. a year; but it was rendered peculiarly acceptable to Mr. Gray, as he obtained it without solicitation.

Soon after he succeeded to this office, the impaired state of his health rendered another journey necessary; and he visited, in 1769, the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland. His remarks on the wonderful scenery which these northern regions display, he transmitted in epistolary journals to his friend, Dr. Wharton, which abound, according to Mr. Mason's elegant diction, with all the wildness of Salvator, and the softness of Claude.

He appears to have been much affected by the anxiety he felt at holding a place without discharging the duties annexed to it. He had always designed reading lectures, but never put it in practice; and a consciousness of this neglect, contributed not a little to increase the malady under which he had long laboured: nay, the office at length became so irksome, that he seriously proposed to resign it.

Towards the close of May, 1771, he removed from Cambridge to London, after having suffered violent attacks of an hereditary gout, to which he had long been subject, notwithstanding he had observed the most rigid abstemiousness throughout the whole course of his life. By the advice of his physicians, he removed from London to Kensington; the air of which place proved so salutary, that he was soon enabled to return to Cambridge, whence he designed to make a visit to his friend, Dr. Wharton, at Old Park, near Durham; indulging a fond hope that the excursion would tend to the re-establishment of his health: but alas! that hope proved delusive. On the 24th of July he was seized, while at dinner in the College-hall, with a sudden nausea, which obliged him to retire to his chamber. The gout had fixed on his stomach in such a degree as to resist all the powers of medicine. On the 29th he was attack-ed with a strong convulsion, which returned with increased violence the ensuing day; and on the evening of the 31st of May, 1771, he departed this life in the 55th year of his age.

From the narrative of his friend, Mr. Mason, it appears, that Gray was actuated by motives of self improvement, and self gratification, in his application to the Muses, rather than any view to pecuniary emolument. His pursuits were in general disinterested; and as he was free from avarice on the one hand, so was he from extravagance on the other: being one of those few characters in the annals of literature, especially in the poetical class, who are devoid of self interest, and at the same time attentive to economy: but Mr. Mason adds, that he was induced to decline taking any advantage of his literary productions by a degree of pride, which influenced him to disdain the idea of being thought an author by profession.

It appears from the same narrative, that Gray made considerable progress in the study of architecture, particularly the Gothic. He endeavoured to trace this branch of the science, from the period of its commencement, through its various changes, till it arrived at its perfection in the time of Henry VIII. He applied himself also to the study of heraldry, of which he obtained a very competent knowledge, as appears from his *Remarks on Saxon Churches*, in the introduction to Mr. Bentham's *History of Ely.*

But the favourite study of Gray, for the last two years of his life, was natural history, which he rather resumed than began, as he had acquired some knowledge of botany in early life, while he was under the tuition of his uncle Antrobus. He wrote copious marginal notes to the works of Linnæus, and other writers in the three kingdoms of nature: and Mr. Mason further observes, that, excepting pure mathematics, and the studies dependent on that science, there was hardly any part of human learning in which he had not acquired a competent skill; in most of them a consummate mastery.

Mr. Mason has declined drawing any formal character of him: but has adopted one from a letter to James Boswell, Esq. by the Rev. Mr. Temple, rector of St. Gluvias, in Cornwall, first printed anonymously in the London Magazine, which, as we conceive authentic, from the sanction of Mr. Mason, we shall therefore transcribe.

"Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the eloquent and profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, and politics, made a principal part of his study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection, and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation of delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had, in some degree, that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve: though he seemed to value others chiefly according to the progress they had made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be considered himself merely as a man of letters; and though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be said, What signifies so much knowledge, when it produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few poems? But let it be considered that Mr. Gray was, to others, at least innocently employed; to himself, certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he was every day making some new acquisition in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask; and he was taught to consider every thing as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that state wherein God hath placed us."

In addition to this character, Mr. Mason has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most before those whom he did not wish to please: and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

Dr. Johnson makes the following observations:—"What has occurred to me, from the slight inspection of his letters, in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgment cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was fastidious, and hard to please. His contempt, however, is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism and infidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

"'You say you cannot conceive how lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue: I will tell you; first, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads no where; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners: vanity is no longer interested in the matter: for a new road is become an old one.'"

As a writer, he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastic foppery to which our kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior.

As a poet, he stands high in the estimation of the candid and judicious. His works are not numerous; but they bear the marks of intense application, and careful revision. The Elegy in the Church-yard is deemed his master-piece; the subject is interesting, the sentiment simple and pathetic, and the versification charmingly melodious. This beautiful composition has been often selected by orators for the display of their rhetorical talents. But as the most finished productions of the human mind have not escaped censure, the works of our author have undergone illiberal comments. His Elegy has been supposed defective in want of plan. Dr. Knox, in his Essays, has observed, "that it is thought by some to be no more than a confused heap of splendid ideas, thrown together without order and without proportion." Some passages have been censured by Kelly in the *Babbler*: and imitations of different authors have been pointed out by other critics. But these imitations cannot be ascertained as there are numberless instances of coincidence of ideas; so that it is difficult to say, with precision, what is or is not a designed or accidental imitation.

Gray, in his Elegy in the Church-yard, has great merit in adverting to the most interesting passions of the human mind, yet his genius is not marked alone by the tender sensibility so conspicuous in that elegant piece; but there is a sublimity which gives it an equal claim to universal admiration.

His Odes on *The Progress of Poetry*, and of *The Bard*, according to Mr. Mason's account, "breathe the high spirit of lyric enthusiasm. The transitions are sudden and impetuous; the language full of fire and force; and the imagery carried, without impropriety, to the most daring height. They have been accused of obscurity; but the one can be obscure to those only who have not read Pindar; and the other only to those who are unacquainted with the history of our own nation."

Of his other lyric pieces, Mr. Wakefield, a learned and ingenious commentator, observes, that, though, like all other human productions, they are not without their defects, yet the spirit of poetry, and exquisite charms of the verse, are more than a compensation for those defects. The Ode on *Eton College* abounds with sentiments natural, and consonant to the feelings of humanity, exhibited with perspicuity of method, and in elegant, intelligible and expressive language. The Sonnet on *The Death of West*, and the Epitaph on *Sir William Williams*, are as perfect compositions of the kind as any in our language.

Dr. Johnson was confessedly a man of great genius; but the partial and uncandid mode of criticism he has adopted in his remarks on the writings of Gray, has given to liberal minds great and just offence. According to Mr. Mason's account, he has subjected Gray's poetry to the most rigorous examination. Declining all consideration of the general plan and conduct of the pieces, he has confined himself solely to strictures on words and forms of expression; and Mr. Mason very pertinently adds, that *verbal* criticism is an ordeal which the most perfect composition cannot pass without injury.

He has also fallen under Mr. Wakefield's severest censure. This commentator affirms, that "he thinks a refutation of his strictures upon Gray a necessary service to the public, without which they might operate with a malignant influence upon the national taste. His censure, however, is too general, and expressed with too much vehemence; and his remarks betray, upon the whole, an unreasonable fastidiousness of taste, and an unbecoming illiberality of spirit. He appears to have turned an unwilling eye upon the beauties of Gray, because his jealousy would not suffer him to see such superlative merit in a cotemporary." These remarks of Mr. Wakefield appears to be well founded; and it has been observed by another writer, that Dr. Johnson, being strongly influenced by his political and religious principles, was inclined to treat, with the utmost severity, some of the productions of our best writers; to which may be imputed that severity with which he censures the lyric performances of Gray. It is highly probable that no one poetical reader will universally subscribe to his decisions, though all may admire his vast intuitive knowledge, and power of discrimination.

In one instance, the doctor's inconsistency, and deviation from his general character, does him honour. After having commented with the most rigid severity on the poetical works of Gray, as if conscious of the injustice done him, he seems to apologize by the following declaration, which concludes his criticism, and shall conclude the memoirs of our author.

"In the character of his Elegy (says Johnson) I rejoice and concur with the common reader; for, by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted with literary prejudices, all the refinements of subtility, and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided, all claim to poetical honours. The *Churchyard* abounds with images which find, a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning, *Yet, e'en these bones*, are to me original; I have never seen the notions in any other place: yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him."

LETTERS

OF

THOMAS GRAY.

I.

FROM MR. WEST* TO MR. GRAY.

You use me very cruelly; you have sent me but one letter since I have been at Oxford, and that too agreeable not to make me sensible how great my loss is in not having more. Next to seeing you is the pleasure of seeing your hand-writing; next to hearing you is the pleasure of hearing from you.—Really and sincerely I wonder at you, that you thought it not worth while to answer my last letter. I hope this will have better success in behalf of your quondam school-fellow; in behalf of one who has walked hand in hand with you, like the two children in the wood,

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* Mr. West's father was lord chancellor of Ireland. His grandfather, by the mother, the famous bishop Burnet. He removed from Eton to Oxford, about the same time that Mr. Gray left that place for Cambridge. In April, 1738, he left Christ Church for the Inner Temple, and Mr. Gray removed from Peterhouse to town the latter end of that year; intending also to apply himself to the study of the law in the same society.

> Through many a flowery path and shelly grot,
> Where learning lulled us in her private maze.

The very thought, you see, tips my pen with poetry, and brings Eton to my view. Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves doctors and masters of arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light, and then think if something be not due to

YOURS.

Christ Church, Nov. 14, 1735.

P. S. I desire you will send me soon, and truly and positively, a History of your own Time.*

II.

TO MR. WEST.

PERMIT me again to write to you, though I have so long neglected my duty, and forgive my brevity, when I tell you, it is occasioned wholly by the hurry I am in to get to a place where I expect to meet with no other pleasure than the sight of you; for I am preparing for London in a few days at furthest. I do not wonder in the least at your frequent blaming my indolence, it ought rather to be called ingratitude, and I am obliged to your goodness for softening so harsh an appellation. When we meet, it will, however, be my greatest of pleasures to know what you do, what you read, and how you spend your time, &c. &c. and to tell you what I do not read, and how I do not, &c. for almost all the employment of my hours may be best explained by negatives ; take my word and experience upon it, doing nothing is a most amusing business ; and yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life ; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress, and gets some ground ; my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty steps more, I shall be just where I was : I may, better than most people, say my life is but a span, were I not afraid lest you should not believe that a person so short-lived could write even so long a letter as this ; in short, I believe I must not send you a history of my own time, till I can send you that also of the Reformation.* However, as the most undeserving people in the world must sure have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own, in being pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and

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* Alluding to his grandfather's history.

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* Carrying on the allusion to the other history written by Mr. West's grandfather.

I believe you are not in danger of being crowded there; it is asking you to an old play, indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuse the whole piece for the sake of a few tolerable lines.

For this little while past I have been playing with Statius; we yesterday had a game at quoits together; you will easily forgive me for having broke his head, as you have a little pique to him. I send you my translation, which I did not engage in because I liked that part of the poem, nor do I now send it to you because I think it deserves it, but merely to show you how I mispend my days.

> Third in the labours of the Disc came on,
> With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon, &c.

Cambridge, May 3, 1736.

III.

FROM MR. WEST.

I AGREE with you that you have broke Statius's head, but it is in like manner as Apollo broke Hyacinth's, you have foiled him infinitely at his own weapon: I must insist on seeing the rest of your translation, and then I will examine it entire, and compare it with the Latin, and be very wise and severe, and put on an inflexible face, such as becomes the character of a true son of Aristarchus, of hypercritical memory. In the meanwhile,

> And calmed the terrors of his claws in gold,

is exactly Statius—Summos auro mansueverat ungues. I never knew before that the golden fangs on hammercloths were so old a fashion. Your Hymeneal I was told was the best in the Cambridge collection before I saw it, and, indeed, it is no great compliment to tell you I thought it so when I had seen it, but sincerely it pleased me best. Methinks the college bards have run into a strange taste on this occasion. Such soft unmeaning stuff about Venus and Cupid, and Peleus and Thetis, and Zephyrs and Dryads, was never read. As for my poor little Eclogue, it has been condemned and beheaded by our Westminster judges; an exordium of about sixteen lines absolutely cut off, and its other limbs quartered in a most barbarous manner. I will send it you in my next as my true and lawful heir, in exclusion of the pretender, who has the impudence to appear under my name.

As yet I have not looked into Sir Isaac. Public disputations I hate; mathematics I reverence; history, morality, and natural philosophy have the greatest charms in my eye; but who can forget poetry? they call it idleness, but it is surely the most enchanting thing in the world, "ac dulce otium et pæne omni negotio pulchrius."

I am, dear Sir, yours while I am

R. W.

Christ Church, May 24, 1736.

IV.

TO MR. WEST.

You must know that I do not take degrees, and, after this term, shall have nothing more of college impertinences to undergo, which I trust will be some pleasure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last, supported by the hopes of being shortly at full liberty to give myself up to my friends and classical companions, who, poor souls! though I see them fallen into great contempt with most people here, yet I cannot help sticking to them, and out of a spirit of obstinacy (I think) love them the better for it; and, indeed, what can I do else? Must I plunge into metaphysics? Alas! I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pour upon mathematics? Alas! I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was not this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said, "the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy of wild asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch and gather under her shadow; It shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." You see here is a pretty collection of desolate animals, which is verified in this town to a tittle, and perhaps it may also allude to your habitation, for you know all types may be taken by abundance of handles; however, I defy your owls to match mine.

If the default of your spirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to say.— We all must submit to that wayward queen: I too in no small degree own her sway.

> I feel her influence while I speak her power.

But if it be a real distemper, pray take more care of your health, if not for your own at least for our sakes, and do not be so soon weary of this little world: I do not know what refined* friendships you may have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in a hurry to see your acquaintance above; among your terrestrial familiars, however, though I say it that should not say it, there positively is not one that has a greater esteem for you than

Yours most sincerely, &c.

Peterhouse, Dec. 1736.

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* Perhaps he meant to ridicule the affected manner of Mrs. Rowe's letters from the dead to the living.

V.

FROM MR. WEST.

I CONGRATULATE you on your being about to leave college,* and rejoice much you carry no degrees with you. For I would not have You dignified, and I not, for the world, you would have insulted me so. My eyes, such as they are, like yours, are neither metaphysical nor mathematical; I have, nevertheless, a great respect for your connoisseurs that way, but am always contented to be their humble admirer. Your collection of desolate animals pleased me so much: but Oxford, I can assure you, has her owls that match yours, and the prophecy has certainly a squint that way. Well, you are leaving this dismal land of bondage, and which way are you turning your face? Your friends, indeed, may be happy in you, but what will you do with your classic companions? An inn of court is as horrid a place as a college, and a moot case is as dear to gentle dullness as a syllogism. But wherever you go, let me beg you not to throw poetry, "like a nauseous weed away;" cherish its sweets in your bosom; they will serve you now and then to correct the disgusting sober follies of the common law, misce stultitiam consiliis brevem, dulce est desipere in loco; so said Horace to Virgil, those two sons of Anak in poetry, and so say I to you in this degenerate land of pigmies,

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* I suspect that Mr. West mistook his correspondent; who, in saying he did not take degrees, meant only to let his friend know that he should soon be released from lectures and disputations. It is certain that Mr. Gray continued at college near two years after the time he wrote the preceding letter.

Mix with your grave designs a little pleasure,
Each day of business has its hour of leisure.

In one of these hours I hope, dear Sir, you will sometimes think of me, write to me, and know me yours,

Ἑξαυδα, μη κευθε νοῳ, ἱνα ειδομεν αμφω.

that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you, and to give you a proof of it I have sent you an elegy of Tibullus translated. Tibullus, you must know, is my favourite elegiac poet; for his language is more elegant and his thoughts more natural than Ovid's. Ovid excels him only in wit, of which no poet had more in my opinion. The reason I choose so melancholy a kind of poesie, is because my low spirits and constant ill health (things in me not imaginary, as you surmise, but too real, alas! and I fear, constitutional) "have tuned my heart to elegies of wo;" and this likewise is the reason why I am the most irregular thing alive at college, for you may depend upon it I value my health above what they call discipline. As for this poor unlicked thing of an elegy, pray criticise it unmercifully, for I send it with that intent. Indeed your late translation of Statius might have deterred me: but I know you are not more able to excel others, than you are apt to forgive the want of excellence, especially when it is found in the productions of,

Your most sincere friend.

Christ Church, Dec. 22, 1736.

VI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

You can never weary me with the repetition of any thing that makes me sensible of your kindness: since that has been the only idea of any social happiness that I have almost ever received, and which (begging your pardon for thinking so differently from you in such cases) I would by no means have parted with for an exemption from all the uneasinesses mixed with it; but it would be unjust to imagine my taste was any rule for yours; for which reason my letters are shorter and less frequent than they would be, had I any materials but myself to entertain you with. Love and brown sugar must be a poor regale for one of yonr gout, and, alas! you know I am by trade a grocer.* Scandal (if I had any) is a merchandize you do not profess dealing in, now and then, indeed, and to oblige a friend, you may perhaps slip a little out of your pocket, as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin, or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it. Monsters appertaining to this climate you have seen already, both wet and dry. So you perceive within how narrow bounds my pen is circumscribed, and the whole contents of my share in our correspondence may be reduced under the two heads of 1st, You, 2dly I; the first is, indeed, a subject to expatiate upon, but you might laugh at me for talking about what I do not understand; the second is so tiny, so tiresome, that you shall hear no more of it than that it is ever.

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* i. e. A man who deals only in coarse and ordinary wares; to these he compares the plain sincerity of his own friendship, undisguised by flattery; which, had he chosen to carry on the allusion, he might have termed the trade of a confectioner.

Yours.

Peterhouse, Dec. 23, 1736.

VII.

FROM MR. WEST.

I HAVE been very ill, and am still hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus, Vos tenet, &c. and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in sickness, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy, and this melancholy letter, I turned into a more melancholy epistle of my own, during my sickness, in the way of imitation; and this I send to you and my friends at Cambridge, not to divert them, for it cannot, but merely to show them how sincere I was when sick: I hope my sending it to them now may convince them I am no less sincere, though perhaps more simple, when well.

AD AMICOS.*

Yes, happy youths, on Camus' sedgy side,
You feel each joy that friendship can divide;
Each realm of science and of art explore,
And with the ancient blend the modern lore.
Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend
To raise the genius or the heart to mend;
Now pleased along the cloistered walk you rove,
And trace the verdant mazes of the grove,
Where social oft, and oft alone, he chose
To catch the zephyr, and to court the muse.
Meantime at me (while all devoid of art
These lines give back the image of my heart)
At me the power that comes or soon or late,
Or aims, or seems to aim, the dart of fate;
From you remote, methinks, alone I stand
Like some sad exile in a desert land;
Around no friends their lenient care to join
In mutual warmth, and mix their heart with mine.
Or real pains, or those which fancy raise,
For ever blot the sunshine of my days;
To sickness still, and still to grief a prey,
Health turns from me her rosy face away.
Just Heaven! what sin, ere life begins to bloom,
Devotes my head untimely to the tomb?
Did e'er this hand against a brother's life
Drug the dire bowl, or point the murderous knife?

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* Almost all Tibullus's elegy is imitated in this little piece, from whence his transition to Mr. Pope's letter is very artfully contrived, and bespeaks a degree of judgment much beyond Mr. West's years.

Did e'er this tongue the slanderer's tale proclaim,
Or madly violate my Maker's name?
Did e'er this heart betray a friend or foe,
Or know a thought but all the world might know?
As yet, just started from the lists of time,
My growing years have scarcely told their prime;
Useless, as yet, through life I've idly run,
No pleasures tasted, and few duties done.
* Ah, who, ere autumn's mellowing suns appear,
Would pluck the promise of the vernal year?
Or, ere the grapes their purple hue betray,
Tear the crude cluster from the morning spray?
Stern Power of Fate, whose ebon sceptre rules
The Stygian deserts and Cimmerian pools,
Forbear, nor rashly smite my youthful heart,
A victim yet unworthy of thy dart;
Ah, stay till age shall blast my withering face,
Shake in my head, and falter in my pace;
Then aim the shaft, then meditate the blow,
† And to the dead my willing shade shall go.
How weak is Man to Reason's judging eye!
Born in this moment, in the next we die;
Part mortal clay, and part ethereal fire,
Too proud to creep, too humble to aspire.
In vain our plans of happiness we raise,
Pain is our lot, and patience is our praise;

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* Quid fraudare juvat vitem crescentibus uvis?
Et modo nata mala vellere poma manu?

So the original. The paraphrase seems to me infinitely more beautiful. There is a peculiar blemish in the second line arising from the synonimes *mala* and *poma*.

† Here he quits Tibullus: the ten following verses have but a remote reference to Mr. Pope's letter.

Wealth, lineage, honours, conquest, or a throne;
Are what the wise would fear to call their own.
Health is at best a vain precarious thing,
And fair-faced youth is ever on the wing:
*'Tis like the stream, beside whose watery bed
Some blooming plant exalts his flowery head,
Nursed by the wave the spreading branches rise,
Shade all the ground and flourish to the skies;
The waves the while beneath in secret flow,
And undermine the hollow bank below;
Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
Bare all the roots, and on their fibres prey,
Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,
And sinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.
But why repine? does life deserve my sigh?
Few will lament my loss whene'er I die.
† For those the wretches I despise or hate,
I neither envy nor regard their fate.
For me, whene'er all-conquering Death shall spread
His wings around my unrepining head,

* "Youth, at the very best, is but the betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age: 'tis like the stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret." *Pope's Works, vol. 7, page 254, 1st edit. Warburton.* Mr. West, by prolonging his paraphrase of this simile, gives it additional beauty from that very circumstance, but he ought to have introduced it by Mr. Pope's own thought, "Youth is a betrayer;" his couplet preceding the simile conveys too general a reflection.

† "I am not at all uneasy at the thought that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me." *Vide ibid.*

* I care not; though this face be seen no more,
The world will pass as cheerful as before;
Bright as before the day-star will appear,
The fields as verdant, and the skies as clear;
Nor storms nor comets will my doom declare,
Nor signs on earth, nor portents in the air;
Unknown and silent will depart my breath,
Nor nature e'er take notice of my death.
Yet some there are (ere spent my vital days)
Within whose breasts my tomb I wish to raise.
Loved in my life, lamented in my end,
Their praise would crown me as their precepts mend:
To them may these fond lines my name endear,
Not from the Poet but the Friend sincere.

Christ Church, July 4, 1737.

VIII.

TO MR. WEST.

After a month's expectation of you, and a fortnight's despair, at Cambridge, I am come to town,

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* "The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green;" so far Mr. West copies his original, but instead of the following part of the sentence, "People will laugh as heartily and marry as fast as they used to do," he inserts a more solemn idea,

Nor storms nor comets, &c.

justly perceiving that the elegiac turn of his epistle would not admit so ludicrous a thought, as was in its place in Mr. Pope's familiar letter; so that we see, young as he was, he had obtained the art of judiciously selecting; one of the first provinces of good taste.

and to better hopes of seeing you. If what you sent me last be the product of your melancholy, what may I not expect from your more cheerful hours? For by this time the ill health that you complain of is (I hope) quite departed; though, if I were self-interested, I ought to wish for the continuance of any thing that could be the occasion of so much pleasure to me. Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose, and force a feeble laugh with me: but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world. However, when you come, I believe they must undergo the fate of all humble companions, and be discarded. Would I could turn them to the same use that you have done, and make an Apollo of them. If they could write such verses with me, not hartshorn, nor spirit of amber, nor all that furnishes the closet of an apothecary's widow, should persuade me to part with them: but, while I write to you, I hear the bad news of lady Walpole's death on Saturday night last. Forgive me if the thought of what my poor Horace must feel on that account, obliges me to have done in reminding you that I am

Yours, &c.

London, Aug. 22, 1737.

IX.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

I was hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you: suffice it that I arrived safe* at my uncle's who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort amidst all this is, that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do, may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous; both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

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* At Burnham in Buckinghamshire.

And as they bow their hoary tops, relate
In murmuring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats me I, (il penseroso) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud too, that is talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us: he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September, 1737.

X.

TO MR. WALPOLE.*

I SYMPATHIZE with you in the sufferings which you foresee are coming upon you. We are both at present, I imagine, in no very agreeable situation; for my part I am under the misfortune of having nothing to do, but it is a misfortune which, thank my stars, I can pretty well bear. You are in a confusion of wine, and roaring, and hunting, and tobacco, and, heaven be praised, you too can pretty well bear it; while our evils are no more, I believe we shall not much repine. I imagine, however, you will rather choose to converse with the living dead, that adorn the walls of your apartments, than with the dead living that deck the middles of them; and prefer a picture of still life to the realities of a noisy one, and, as I guess, will imitate what you prefer, and for an hour or two at noon will stick yourself up as formal as if you had been fixed in your frame for these hundred years, with a pink or rose in one hand, and a great seal ring on the other. Your name, I assure you, has been propagated in these countries by a convert of yours, one * * *; he has brought over his whole family to you: they were before pretty good Whigs, but now they are absolute Walpolians. We have hardly any body in the parish but knows exactly the dimensions of the hall and saloon at

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* At this time with his father at Houghton.

Houghton, and begin to believe that the *lantern is not so great a consumer of the fat of the land as disaffected persons have said: for your reputation, we keep to ourselves your not hunting nor drinking hogan, either of which here, would be sufficient to lay your honour in the dust. To-morrow se'nnight I hope to be in town, and not long after at Cambridge.

I am &c.

Burnham, September 1737.

XI.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

My dear Sir, I should say †Mr. Inspector General of the Exports and Imports; but that appellation would make but an odd figure in conjunction with the three familiar monosyllables above written, for

> Nun bene conveniunt nec in unâ sede morantur
> Majestas et amor.

Which is, being interpreted, Love does not live at the Custom-house; however, by what style, title or denomination soever you choose to be dignified, or distinguished hereafter, these three words will stick by you like a bur, and you can no more get quit of these and your christian name, than St. Anthony could of his pig. My motions at present (which you

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* A favourite object of Tory satire at the time.

† Mr. Walpole was just named to that post, which he exchanged soon after for that of Usher of the Exchequer.

are pleased to ask after) are much like those of a pendulum or (*Dr. Longically speaking) oscillatory. I swing from chapel or hall home, or from home to chapel or hall. All the strange incidents that happen in my journeys and returns I shall be sure to acquaint you with; the most wonderful is, that it now rains exceedingly, this has refreshed the †prospect, as the way for the most part lies between green fields on either hand, terminated with buildings at some distance, castles, I presume, and of great antiquity. The roads are very good, being, as I suspect, the works of Julius Cæsar's army, for they still preserve, in many places, the appearance of a pavement in pretty good repair, and, if they were not so near home, might perhaps be as much admired as the Via Appia; there are at present, several rivulets to be crossed, and which serve to enliven the view all around. The country is exceeding fruitful in ravens and such black cattle; but, not to tire you with my travels I abruptly conclude.

Yours, &c.

August, 1733.

XII.

TO MR. WEST.

I AM coming away all so fast, and leaving behind me, without the least remorse, all the beauties of

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* Dr. Long, the master of Pembroke-Hall, at this time read lectures in experimental philosophy.

† All that follows is a humorously hyperbolic description of the quadrangle of Peter-House.

Sturbridge Fair. Its white bears may roar, its apes may wring their hands, and crocodiles cry their eyes out, all's one for that; I shall not once visit them, nor so much as take my leave. The university has published a severe edict against schismatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little procterlings to see its orders executed, being under mighty apprehensions lest *Henley and his gilt tub should come to the fair and seduce their young ones; but their pains are to small purpose, for lo, after all, he is not coming.

I am at this instant in the very agonies of leaving college, and would not wish the worst of my enemies a worse situation. If you knew the dust, the old boxes, the bedsteads, and tutors that are about my ears, you would look upon this letter as a great effort of my resolution and unconcernedness in the midst of evils. I fill up my paper with a loose sort of version of that scene in Pastor Fido that begins, Care selve beati.†

Sept. 1738.

XIII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Amiens, April 1, N. S. 1739.

As we made but a very short journey to-day, and came to our inn early, I sit down to give you some account

* Orator Henley.

† This Latin version is extremely elegiac, but as it is only a version I do not insert it.

of our expedition. On the 29th (according to the style here) we left Dover at twelve at noon, and with a pretty brisk gale, which pleased every body mighty well, except myself, who was extremely sick the whole time; we reached Calais by five: the weather changed, and it began to snow hard the minute we got into the harbour, where we took the boat, and soon landed. Calais is an exceeding old, but very pretty town, and we hardly saw any thing there that was not so new and so different from England, that it surprised us agreeably. We went the next morning to the great church, and were at high mass (it being Easter Monday.) We saw also the Convent of the Capuchins, and the nuns of St. Dominic; with these last we held much conversation, especially with an English nun, a Mrs. Davis, of whose work I sent you, by the return of the pacquet, a letter-case to remember her by. In the afternoon we took a post-chaise (it still snowing very hard) for Boulogne, which was only eighteen miles further. This chaise is a strange sort of conveyance, of much greater use than beauty, resembling an ill-shaped chariot, only with the door opening before instead of the side; three horses draw it, one between the shafts, and the other two on each side, on one of which the postillion rides, and drives too.* This vehicle will, upon occasion, go fourscore miles a day, but Mr. Walpole, being in no hurry, chooses to make easy journeys of it, and they are easy ones indeed; for the motion is much like that of a sedan; we go about six miles an hour, and commonly change horses at the end of it. It is true they are no very graceful steeds, but they go well, and through roads which they say are bad for France, but to me they seem gravel walks and bowling-greens; in short, it would be the finest travelling in the world, were it not for the inns, which are mostl terrible places indeed. But to describe our progress somewhat more regularly, we came into Bologne when it was almost dark, and went out pretty early on Tuesday morning; so that all I can say about it is, that it is a large, old, fortified town, with more English in it than French. On Tuesday we were to go to Abbéville, seventeen leagues, or fifty-one short English miles; but by the way we dined at Moutreuil, much to our hearts, content, on stinking mutton cutlets, addled eggs, and ditch water. Madame the hostess made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace, and a sack of linsey-woolsey. We supped and lodged pretty well at Abbéville, and had time to see a little of it before we came out this morning. There are seventeen convents in it, out of which we saw the chapels of the Minims, and the Carmelite nuns. We are now come further thirty miles to Amiens, the chief city of the province of Picardy. We have seen the Cathedral, which is just what that of Canterbury must have been before the reformation. It is about the same size, a huge Gothic building, beset on the outside with thousands of small statues, and within adorned with beautiful painted windows, and a vast number of chapels dressed out in all their finery of altar-pieces, embroidery gilding, and marble. Over the high altar are preserved, in a very large wrought shrine of massy gold, the relics of St. Firmin, their patron saint. We went also to the chapels of the Jesuits and Ursuline nuns, the latter of which is very richly adorned. To-morrow we shall lie at Clermont, and next day reach Paris. The country we have passed through hitherto has been flat, open, but agreeably diversified with villages, fields well cultivated, and little rivers. On every hillock is a wind-mill, a crucifix, or a Virgin Mary dressed in flowers, and a sarcenet robe; one sees not many people or carriages on the road; now and then indeed you meet a strolling friar, a countryman with his great muff, or a woman riding astride on a little ass, with short petticoats, and a great head-dress of blue wool. * * *

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* This was before the introduction of post-chaises here, or it would not have appeared a circumstance worthy notice.

XIV.

TO MR. WEST.

Paris, April 12, 1739.

Enfin donc me voici à Paris. Mr. Walpole is gone out to supper at Lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good supper; for these three days we have been here, have actually given me an aversion to eating in general. If hunger be the best sauce to meat, the French are certainly the worst cooks in the world; for what tables we have seen have been so delicately served, and so profusely, that, after rising from one of them, one imagines it impossible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad; mais n'importe, courage, allons! for if I wait till my head grow clear and settle a little, you may stay long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two: they have not been disagreeable ones: through a fine, open country, admirable roads, and in an easy conveyance; the inns not absolutely intolerable, and images quite unusual presenting themselves on all hands. At Amiens we saw the fine cathedral, and eat paté de perdix: passed through the park of Chantilly by the duke of Bourbon's palace, which we only beheld as we passed; broke down at Lausarche; stopped at St. Denis, saw all the beautiful monuments of the kings of France, and the vast treasures of the abbey, rubies, and emeralds as big as small eggs, crucifixes and vows, crowns and reliquaires, inestimable value; but of all their curiosities the thing the most to our tastes, and which they indeed do the justice to esteem the glory of their collection, was a vase of an entire onyx, measuring at least five inches over, three deep, and of great thickness. It is at least two thousand years old, the beauty of the stone and sculpture upon it (representing the mysteries of Bacchus) beyond expression admirable; we have dreamed of it ever since. The jolly old Benedic, that showed us the treasures, had in his youth been ten years a soldier; he laughed at all the relics, ver full f stories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris and were driving through the streets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, voilà Milors Heldernesse, Conway, and his brother; all stayed supper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here no body ever sleeps; it is not the way. Next day go to dine at my lord Holdernesse's, there was the Abbé Prevôt, author of the Cleveland, and several other pieces much esteemed: the rest were English. At night we went to the Pandore; a spectacle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of machinery of three scenes. The first represents the chaos, and by degrees the separation of the elements: the second, the temple of Jupiter, and the giving of the box to Pandora: the third the opening of the box, and all the mischiefs that ensued. An absurd design, but executed in the highest perfection, and that in one of the finest theatres in the world; it is the grande sales des machines in the palais des Tuilleries. Next day dined at lord Waldegrave's; then to the opera. Imagine to yourself for the drama four acts* entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on some little history, skilfully taken out of an ancient author, e. g. Ovid's Metamorphoses, &c. and with great address converted into a French piece of gallantry. For instance, that which I saw, called the Ballet de la Paix, had its first act built upon the story of Nireus. Homer having said that he was the handsomest man of his time, the poet, imagining such a one could not want a mistress, has given him one. These two come in and sing sentiment in lamentable strains, neither air nor recitative; only, to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance, or (to one's great sorrow) by a chorus that borders the stage from one end to the other, and screams, past all power of simile to represent. The second act was Baucis and Philemon. Baucis is a beautiful young shepherdess, and Philemon her swain. Jupiter falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; so it is all mighty well, and the chorus sing and dance the praises of Constancy. The two other acts were about Iphis and Ianthe, and the judgment of Paris. Imagine, I say, all this transacted by cracked voices, trilling divisions upon two notes and a half, accompanied by an orchestra of humstrums, and a whole house more attentive than if Farinelli sung, and you will almost have formed a just notion of the thing. Our astonishment at their absurdity you can never conceive; we had enough to do to express it by screaming an hour louder than the whole dramatis personæ. We have also seen twice the Comedie Françoise; first, the Mahomet Second, a tragedy that has had a great run of late; and the thing itself does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond measure delightful. Mademoiselle Gausin (M. Voltaire's Zara) has with a charming (though little) person, the most pathetic tone of voice, the finest expression in her face, and most proper action imaginable. There is also a Dufrêne, who did the chief character, a handsome man and a prodigious fine actor. The second we saw was the Philosophe marié, and here they performed as well in comedy; there is a Mademoiselle Quinault somewhat in Mrs. Clive's way, and a Monsieur Grandval, in the nature of Wilks, who is the genteelest thing in the world. There are several more would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not seen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is spent in seeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, &c. the quarter of which is not yet exhausted. For my part, I could entertain myself this month merely with the common streets and the people in them. * * *

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* The French opera has only three acts, but often a prologue on a different subject, which (as Mr. Walpole informs me, who saw it at the same time) was the case in this very representation.

XV.

TO MR. WEST.

Paris, May 22, 1739.

After the little particulars aforesaid I should have proceeded to a journal of our transactions for this week past, should have carried you post from hence to Versailles, hurried you through the gardens to Trianon, back again to Paris, so away to Chantilly. But the fatigue is perhaps more than you can bear, and moreover I think I have reason to stomach your last piece of gravity. Supposing you were in your soberest mood, I am sorry you should think me capable of ever being so dissipé, so evaporé, as not to be in a condition of relishing any thing you could say to me. And now, if you have a mind to make your peace with me, arouse ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exercise is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-boots, and set out with me, last Saturday evening, for Versailles—and so at eight o'clock, passing through a road speckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and partridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand, with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itself to terminate the view; facing which, on each side of you, is placed a semi-circle of very handsome buildings, which form the stables. These we will not enter into, because you know we are no jockies. Well! and is this the great front of Versailles? What a huge heap of littleness! it is composed, as it were of three courts, all open to the eye at once, and gradually diminishing till you come to the royal apartments, which on this side present but half a dozen windows and a balcony. This last is all that can be called a front, for the rest is only great wings. The hue of all this mass is black, dirty red, and yellow; the first proceeding from stone changed by age; the second, from a mixture of brick; and the last from a profusion of tarnished gilding. You cannot see a more disagreeable tout-ensemble; and, to finish the matter, it is all stuck over in many places with small busts of a tawny hue between every two windows. We pass through this to go into the garden, and here the case is indeed altered; nothing can be vaster and more magnificent than the back front; before it a very spacious terrace spreads itself, adorned with two large basins; these are bordered and lined (as most of the others) with white marble, with handsome statues of bronze reclined on their edges. From hence you descend a huge flight of steps into a semi-circle formed by woods that are cut all round into niches, which are filled with beautiful copies of all the famous antique statues in white marble. Just in the midst is the basin of Latona; she and her children are standing on the top of a rock in the middle, on the sides of which are the peasants, some half, some totally changed into frogs, all which throw out water at her in great plenty. From this place runs on the great alley, which brings you into a complete round, where is the basin of Apollo, the biggest in the gardens. He is rising in his car out of the water, surrounded by nymphs and tritons, all in bronze, and finely executed; and these, as they play, raise a perfect storm about him; beyond this is the great canal, a prodigious long piece of water, that terminates the whole. All this you have at one coup d'œil in entering the garden, which is truly great. I cannot say as much of the general taste of the place; every thing you behold savours too much of art; all is forced, all is constrained about you; statues and vases sowed every where without distinction; sugar-loaves and mince-pies of yew; scrawl-work of box, and little squirting jets-d'eau, besides a great sameness in the walks, cannot help striking one at first sight, not to mention the silliest of labyrinths, and all Æsop's fables in water; since these were designed in usum Delphini only. Here then we walk by moonlight, and hear the ladies and the nightingales sing. Next morning, being Whitsunday, make ready to go to the Installation of nine knights du

Saint Esprit, Cambis is one :* high mass is celebrated with music, great crowd, much incense, king, queen, dauphin, mesdames, cardinals, and court! knights arrayed by his majesty ; reverences before the altar, not bows, but curtsies ; stiff hams ; much tittering among the ladies ; trumpets, kettle-drums, and fifes. My dear West, I am vastly delighted with Trianon, all of us with Chantilly ; if you would know why, you must have patience, for I can hold my pen no longer, except to tell you that I saw Britannicus last night ; all the characters, particularly Agrippina and Nero done to perfection ; to-morrow Phædra and Hippolytus. We are making you a little bundle of petite pieces ; there is nothing in them, but they are acting at present ; there are two Crebillon's Letters, and Amusemens sur le langage des Bêtes, said to be one Bougeant, a Jesuit ; they are both esteemed, and lately come out. This day se'nnight we go to Rheims.

XVI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rheims, June 21, N. S. 1739.

We have now been settled almost three weeks in this city, which is more considerable upon account of its size and antiquity, than from the number of its inhabitants, or any advantages of commerce. There is little in it worth a stranger's curiosity, besides the cathedral church, which is a vast Gothic building of a surprising beauty and lightness, all covered over with a profusion of little statues, and other ornaments. It is here the kings of France are crowned by the archbishop of Rheims, who is the first peer, and the primate of the kingdom. The holy vessel made use of on that occasion, which contains the oil, is kept in the church of St. Nicasius hard by, and is believed to have been brought by an angel from heaven at the coronation of Clovis, the first Christian king. The streets in general have but a melancholy aspect, the houses all old; the public walks run along the side of a great moat under the ramparts, where one hears a continual croaking of frogs; the country round about is one great plain covered with vines, which at this time of the year afford no very pleasing prospect, as being not above a foot high. What pleasures the place denies to the sight, it makes up to the palate; since you have nothing to drink but the best champaigne in the world, and all sorts of provisions equally good. As to other pleasures, there is not that freedom of conversation among the people of fashion here, that one sees in other parts of France; for though they are not very numerous in this place, and consequently must live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my lord Conway had spent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were soon introduced into all their assemblies. As soon as you enter, the lady of the house presents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you sit down, and play forty deals without intermission, excepting one quarter of an hour, when every body rises to eat of what they call the gouter, which supplies the place of our tea, and is a service of wine, fruits, cream, sweetmeats, craw-fish, and cheese. People take what they like and sit down again to play; after that, they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their separate habitations. Very seldom any suppers or dinners are given; and this is the manner they live among one another; not so much out of any aversion they have to pleasure, as out of a sort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is sure they do not hate gayety any more than the rest of their country-people, and can enter into diversions, that are once proposed, with a good grace enough; for instance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the best fashion here, at a garden in the town, to walk; when one of the ladies bethought herself of asking, why should not we sup here? Immediately the cloth was laid by the side of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant supper served up: after which another said, Come, let us sing; and directly began herself. From singing we insensibly fell to dancing, and singing in a round: when somebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company of them was ordered. Minuets were begun in the open air, and then some countrydances, which held till four o'clock next morning: at which hour the gayest lady there proposed, that such as were weary should get into their coaches, and the rest of them should dance before them with the music in the van; and in this manner we paraded through all the principal streets of the city, and waked every body in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a custom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the same manner next week, but the women did not come into it; so I believe it will drop, and they will return to their dull cards, and usual formalities. We are not to stay above a month longer here, and shall then go to Dijon, the chief city of Burgundy, a very splendid and a very gay town; at least such is the present design.

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* The Comte de Cambis was lately returned from his embassy in England.

XVII.

TO HIS FATHER.

Dijon, Friday, Sept. 11, N. S. 1739.

We have made three short days' journey of it from Rheims hither, where we arrived the night before last. The road we have passed through has been extremely agreeable: it runs through the most fertile part of Champaigne by the side of the river Marne, with a chain of hills on each hand at some distance, entirely covered with woods and vineyards, and every now and then the ruins of some old castle on their tops: we lay at St. Dizier the first night, and at Langres the second, and got hither the next evening time enough to have a full view of this city on entering it. It lies in a very extensive plain covered with vines and corn, and consequently is plentifully supplied with both. I need not tell you that it is the chief city of Burgundy, nor that it is of great antiquity; considering which one should imagine it ought to be larger than one finds it. However, what it wants in extent is made up in beauty and cleanliness, and in rich convents and churches, most of which we have seen. The palace of the States is a magnificent new building, where the duke of Bourbon is lodged when he comes every three years to hold that assembly, as governor of the province. A quarter of a mile out of the town is a famous abbey of Carthusians, which we are just returned from seeing. In their chapel are the tombs of the ancient dukes of Burgundy, that were so powerful, till, at the death of Charles the Bold, the last of them, this part of his dominions was united by Louis XI. to the crown of France. To-morrow we are to pay a visit to the abbot of the Cistercians, who lives a few leagues off, and who uses to receive all strangers with great civility; his abbey is one of the richest in the kingdom; he keeps open house always, and lives with great magnificence. We have seen enough of this town already, to make us regret the time we spent at Rheims; it is full of people of condition, who seem to form a much more agreeable society than we found in Champaigne; but as we shall stay here but two or three days longer, it is not worth while to be introduced into their houses. On Monday or Tuesday we are to set out for Lyons, which is two days' journey distant, and from thence you shall hear again from me.

XVIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Lyons, Sept. 18, N. S. 1739.

Scavez vous bien, mon cher ami, que je vous hais, que je vous deteste? voila, des termes un peu fortes; and that will save me, upon a just computation, a page of paper and six drops of ink; which, if I confined myself to reproaches of a more moderate nature, I should be obliged to employ in using you according to your deserts. What! to let any body reside three months at Rheims, and write but once to them? Please to consult Tully de Amicit. page 5, line 25, and you will find it said in express terms, "Ad amicum inter Remos relegatum mense uno quinquies scriptum esto;" nothing more plain, or less liable to lse interpretations. Now because, I suppose, it will give you pain to know we are in being, I take this opportunity to tell you that we are at the ancient and celebrated Lugdunum, a city situated upon the confluence of the Rhône and Saône (Arar, I should say) two people, who, though of tempers extremely unlike, think fit to join hands here, and make a little party to travel to the Mediterranean in company; the lady comes gliding along through the fruitful plains of Burgundy, incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non possit; the gentleman runs all rough and roaring down from the mountains of Switzerland to meet her; and with all her soft airs she likes him never the worse: she goes through the middle of the city in state, and he passes incog. without the walls, but waits for her a little below. The houses here are so high, and the streets so narrow, as would be sufficient to render Lyons the dismallest place in the world; but the number of people, and the face of commerce diffused about it, are, at least, as sufficient to make it the liveliest. Between these two sufficiencies you will be in doubt what to think of it; so we shall leave the city, and proceed to its environs, which are beautiful beyond expression: it is surrounded with mountains, and those mountains all bedropped and bespeckled with houses, gardens, and plantations of the rich Bourgeois, who have from thence a prospect of the city in the vale below on one hand, on the other the rich plains of the Lyonnois, with the rivers winding among them, and the Alps, with the mountains of Dauphine, to bound the view. All yesterday morning we were busied in climbing up Mount Fourviere, where the ancient city stood perched at such a height, that nothing but the hopes of gain could certainly ever persuade their neighbours to pay them a visit. Here are the ruins of the emperors' palaces, that resided here, that is to say, Augustus and Severus: they consist in nothing but great masses of old wall, that have only their quality to make them respected. In a vineyard of the Minims are remains of a theatre; the fathers, whom they belong to, hold them in no esteem at all, and would have showed us their sacristy and chapel instead of them. The Ursuline Nuns have in their garden some Roman baths, but we having the misfortune to be men, and heretics, they did not think proper to admit us. Hard by are eight arches of the most magnificent aqueduct, said to be erected by Antony, when his legions were quartered here; there are many other parts of it dispersed up and down the country, for it brought the water from a river many leagues off in La Forez. Here are remains too of Agrippa's seven great roads which met at Lyons; in some places they lie twelve feet deep in the ground. In short, a thousand matters that you shall not know, till you give me a description of the Pais de Tombridge, and the effect its waters have upon you.

XIX.

FROM MR. WEST.

Temple, Sept. 28, 1739.

If wishes could turn to realities, I would fling down my law books, and sup with you to-night. But, alas! here I am doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleasures which a gay climate can afford. It is out of the power of my heart to envy your good fortune, yet I cannot help indulging a few natural desires; as for example, to take a walk with you on the banks of the Rhone, and to be climbing up Mount Forurviere;

> Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari:
> Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt.

However, so long as I am not deprived of your correspondence, so long shall I always find some pleasure in being at home. And, setting all vain curiosity aside, when the fit is over, and my reason begins to come to herself, I have several other powerful motives which might easily cure me of my restless inclinations. Amongst these, my mother's ill state of health is not the least, which was the reason of our going to Tunbridge; so that you cannot expect much description or amusement from thence. Nor indeed is there much room for either; for all diversions there may be reduced to two articles, gaming and going to church. They were pleased to publish certain Tunbrigiana this season; but such ana! I believe there were never so many vile little verses put together before. So much for Tunbridge. London affords me as little to say. What! so huge a town as London? Yes, consider only how I live in that town. I never go into the gay or high world, and consequently receive nothing from thence to brighten my imagination. The busy world I leave to the busy; and am resolved never to talk politics till I can act at the same time. To tell old stories, or prate of old books, seems a little musty; and toujours, chapon bouilli, won't do. However, for want of better fare, take another little mouthful of my poetry.

> O meæ jucunda comes quietis!
> Quæ fere ægrotum solita es levare
> Pectus, et sensim, ah! nimis ingruentes
> Fallere curas:
>
> Quid canes? quanto Lyra dic furore
> Gesties, quando hâc reducem sodalem!
> Glauciam* gaudere simul videbis
> Meque sub umbrâ?

XX.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Lyons, Oct. 13, N. S. 1739.

It is now almost five weeks since I left Dijon, one of the gayest and most agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons, its reverse in all these particulars. It is the second in the kingdom in bigness and rank; the streets excessively narrow and nasty; the houses immensely high and large; (that, for instance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five stories;) it swarms with inhabitants like Paris itself, but chiefly a mercantile people too much given up to commerce to think of their own, much less of a stranger's diversions. We have no acquaintance in the town, but such English as happen to be passing through here, in their way to Italy and the south, which at present happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight since we set out from hence upon a little excursion to Geneva. We took the longest road, which lies through Savoy, on purpose to see a famous monastery, called the Grand Chartreuse, and had no reason to think our time lost. After having travelled seven days very slow (for we did not change horses, it being impossible for a chaise to go post in these roads) we arrived at a little village among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horses, who are used to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuse. It is six miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not six feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine-trees hanging over head; on the other a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld. Add to this the strange views made by the crags and cliffs on the other hand; the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impossible to describe; you will conclude we had no occasion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno chose to retire to, and upon its very top founded the aforesaid convent, which is the superior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers, who are commissioned to entertain strangers (for the rest must neither speak one to another, nor to any one else,) received us very kindly; and set before us a repast of dried fish, eggs, butter and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They pressed us to spend the night there, and to stay some days with them; but this we could not do, so they led us about their house, which is, you must think, like a little city; for there are 100 fathers, besides 300 servants, that make their clothes, grind their corn, press their wine, and do every thing among themselves. The whole is quite orderly and simple; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency, and the strange situation, more than supply the place of it. In the evening we descended by the same way, passing through many clouds that were then forming themselves on the mountain's side. Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the duchy, and residence of the king of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and insignificant appearance; we lay at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy: the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to say any thing about it, nor of our solitary journey back again. * * *

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* He gives Mr. Gray the name of Glaucias frequently in his Latin verse, as Mr. Gray calls him Favonius.

XXI.

TO HIS FATHER.

Lyons, Oct. 25, N. S. 1739.

In my last I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva; I have only to add, that we stayed about a week, in order to see Mr. Conway settled there. I do not wonder so many English choose it for their residence; the city is very small, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is surrounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air; which, joined to the happy, lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact discipline always as strictly observed as in time of war, makes the little republic appear a match for a much greater power; though perhaps Geneva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent with Windsor and its two parks. To one that has passed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more striking than the contrast, as soon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which separates it from the king of Sardinia's dominions; on the other side of it lies a country naturally, indeed, fine and fertile; but you meet with nothing in it but meager, ragged, bare-footed peasants, with their children, in extreme misery and nastiness: and even of these no great numbers. You no sooner have crossed the stream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more; not a beggar, hardly a discontented face to be seen, numerous, and well-dressed people swarming on the ramparts; drums beating, soldiers well-clothed and armed, exercising; and folks, with business in their looks, hurrying to and fro; all contribute to make any person, who is not blind, sensible what a difference there is between the two governments, that are the causes of one view and the other. The beautiful lake, at one end of which the town is situated; its extent; the several states that border upon it; and all its pleasures, are too well known for me to mention them. We sailed upon it as far as the dominions of Geneva extend, that is, about two leagues and a half on each side, and landed at several of the little houses of pleasure that the inhabitants have built all about it, who received us with much politeness. The same night we eat part of a trout, taken in the lake, that weighed thirty-seven pounds: as great a monster as it appeared to us, it was esteemed there nothing extraordinary, and they assured us, it was not uncommon to catch them of fifty pounds: they are dressed here, and sent post to Paris upon some great occasions; nay, even to Madrid, as we were told. The road we returned through was not the same we came by; we crossed the Rhone at Seyssel, and passed for three days among the mountains of Bugey, without meeting with any thing new; at last we came out into the plains of La Bresse, and so to Lyons again. Sir Robert has written to Mr. Walpole, to desire he would go to Italy, which he has resolved to do; so that all the scheme of spending the winter in the south of France is laid aside, and we are to pass it in a much finer country. You may imagine I am not sorry to have this opportunity of seeing the place in the world that best deserves it: besides, as the pope, who is eighty-eight, and has been lately at the point of death, cannot probably last a great while, perhaps we may have the fortune to be present at the election of a new one, when Rome will be in all its glory. Friday next we certainly begin our journey; in two days we shall come to the foot of the Alps, and six more we shall be in passing them. Even here the winter is begun; what then must it be among those vast snowy mountains where it is hardly ever summer? We are, however, as well armed as possible against the cold, with muffs, hoods, and masks of beaver, fur-boots, and bear skins. When we arrive at Turin, we shall rest after the fatigues of the journey. * * *

XXII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Turin, Nov. 7, N. S. 1739.

I am this night arrived here, and have just sat down to rest me after eight days' tiresome journey: for the three first we had the same road we before passed through to go to Geneva; the fourth we turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the side of the river Arc, which works itself a passage, with great difficulty and a mighty noise, among vast quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was so far advanced, as in great measure to spoil the beauty of the prospect; however, there was still somewhat fine remaining amidst the savageness and horror of the place. The sixth we began to go up several of these mountains; and as we were passing one, met with an odd accident enough: Mr. Walpole had a little fat black spaniel, that he was very fond of, which he sometimes used to set down, and let it run by the chaise side. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at most; on one side was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vast precipice; it was noon-day, and the sun shone bright, when all of a sudden, from the wood-side, (which was as steep upwards as the other part was downwards) out rushed a great wolf, came close to the head of the horses, seized the dog by the throat, and rushed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in less than a quarter of a minute; we all saw it, and yet the servants had not time to draw their pistols, or do any thing to save the dog. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horses; chaise, and we, and all must inevitably have tumbled above fifty fathoms perpendicular down the precipice. The seventh we came to Lanebourg, the last town in Savoy; it lies at the foot of the famous Mount Cenis, which is so situated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaise was forced to be pulled to pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules: we ourselves were wrapped up in our furs, and seated upon a sort of matted chair without legs, which is carried upon poles in the manner of a bier, and so begun to ascend by the help of eight men. It was six miles to the top, where a plain opens itself about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep snow, and in the midst of that a great lake of unfathomable depth, from whence a river takes its rise, and tumbles over monstrous rocks quite down the other side of the mountain. The descent is six miles more, but infinitely more steep than the going up; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness in places where none but they could go three paces without falling. The immensity of the precipices, the roaring of the river and torrents that run into it, the huge crags covered with ice and snow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impossible to conceive without seeing them; and though we had heard many strange descriptions of the scene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and stopped a little while at La Ferriere, a small village about three quarters of the way down, but still among the clouds, where we began to hear a new language spoken round about us; at last we got quite down, went through the Pas de Suse, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortresses, and lay at Bossolens: next evening, through a fine avenue of nine miles in length, as straight as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the principality, and the residence of the king of Sardinia.*** We shall stay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days' journey, to go post.

I am, &c,

XXIII.

TO MR. WEST.

Turin, Nov. 16, N. S. 1739.

After eight days' journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin—you approach it by a handsome avenue of nine miles long, and quite straight. The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragoons, called Douaniers, who mumbled us for some time. The city is not large, as being a place of strength, and consequently confined within its fortifications: it has many beauties and some faults; among the first are streets all laid out by the line, regular uni-

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*** That part of the letter here omitted, contained only a description of the city; which, as Mr. Gray has given it to Mr. West in the following letter, and that in a more lively manner, I thought it unnecessary to insert; a liberty I have taken in other parts of this correspondence, in order to avoid repetitions.

form buildings, fine walks that surround the whole, and in general a good lively clean appearance: but the houses are of brick, plastered, which is apt to want repairing; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn; and every thing very slight, which is apt to tumble down. There is an excellent opera, but it is only in the carnival: balls every night, but only in the carnival: masquerades too, but only in the carnival. This carnival lasts only from Christmas to Lent; one half of the remaining part of the year is passed in remembering the last, the other in expecting the future carnival. We cannot well subsist upon such slender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian comedy, and a puppet-show, called Rappresentazione d'un' anima dannata, which, I think, are all the present diversions of the place; except the Marquise de Cavaillac's conversazione, where one goes to see people play at ombre and taroc, a game with 72 cards all painted with suns, and moons, and devils, and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court; the family are at present at a country palace, called La Venerie. The palace here in town is the very quintessence of gilding and looking-glass; inlaid floors, carved panels, and painting wherever they could stick a brush. I own I have not, as yet, any where met with those grand and simple works of art, that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for: but those of nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining. Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day: you have death perpetually before your eyes; only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frighting it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to choose such a situation for his retirement; and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloïse were not forgot upon this occasion: if I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees; il me semble, que j'ai vu ce chien de visage là quelque part. You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was. The week we have since passed among the Alps, has not equalled the single day upon that mountain, because the winter was rather too far advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the savage rudeness of the view is inconceiveable without seeing it: I reckoned, in one day, thirteen cascades, the least of which was, I dare say, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaise with me, and beheld his "Nives cœlo prope immistæ, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora jumentaque torrida frigore, homines intonsi et inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu; omnia confragosa, præruptaque." The creatures that inhabit them are, in all respects, below humanity; and most of them, especially women, have the tumidum guttur, which they call goscia. Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far; and its horrors were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine monsters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their stock of provisions and firing, and so are buried in their hut for a month or two under the snow. When we were down it, and got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find "Apricos quosdam colles, rivosque prope silvas, et jam humano cultu digniora loca." I read Silius Italicus too, for the first time; and wished for you, according to custom.—We set out for Genoa in two days' time.

XXIV.

TO MR. WEST.

Genoa, Nov. 21, 1738.

Horridos tractus, Boreæque linquens
Regna Taurini fera, molliorem
Advehor brumam, Genuæque amantes
Litora soles.

At least, if they do not, they have a very ill taste; for I never beheld any thing more amiable: only figure to yourself a vast semicircular basin, full of fine blue sea, and vessels of all sorts and sizes, some sailing out, some coming in, and others at anchor; and all around it palaces and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens, and marble terraces full of orange and cypress trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which altogether compose the grandest of theatres.—This is the first coup d'œil, and is almost all I am yet able to give you an account of, for we arrived late last night. To-day was, luckily, a great festival, and in the morning we resorted to the church of the Madonna delle Vigne, to put up our little orisons; (I believe I forgot to tell you that we have been sometime converts to the holy catholic church,) we found our lady richly drest out, with a crown of diamonds on her own head, another upon the child's, and a constellation of wax lights burning before them: shortly after came the doge, in his robes of crimson damask, and a cap of the same, followed by the senate in black. Upon his approach, began a fine concert of music, and among the rest two eunuchs' voices, that were a perfect feast to ears that had heard nothing but French operas for a year. We listened to this, and breathed nothing but incense for two hours. The doge is a very tall, lean, stately, old figure, called Constantino Balbi; and the senate seem to have been made upon the same model.—They said their prayers, and heard an absurd white friar preach, with equal devotion. After this we went to the Annonciata, a church built by the family Lomellini, and belonging to it; which is, indeed, a most stately structure! the inside wholly marble of various kinds, except where gold and painting take its place.—From hence to the palazzo Doria. I should make you sick of marble, if I told you how it was lavished here upon the porticoes, the ballustrades, and terraces, the lowest of which extends quite to the sea. The inside is by no means answerable to the outward magnificence; the furniture seems to be as old as the founder of the family.* Their great embossed silver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at sea, how he entertained the emperor Charles, and how he refused the sovereignty of the commonwealth when it was offered him; the rest is old-fashioned velvet chairs, and Gothic tapestry. The rest of the day has been spent, much to our hearts' content, in cursing French music and architecture, and in singing the praises of Italy. We find this place so very fine, that we are in fear of finding nothing finer.—We are fallen in love with the Mediterranean sea, and hold your lakes and your rivers in vast contempt. This is

"The happy country where huge lemons grow,"

as Waller says; and I am sorry to think of leaving it in a week for Parma, although it be

The happy country where huge cheeses grow.

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* The famous Andrea Doria.

XXV.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Bologna, Dec. 9, N. S. 1739.

Our journey hither has taken up much less time than I expected. We left Genoa (a charming place and one that deserved a longer stay) the week before last; crossed the mountains, and lay that night at Tortona, the next at St. Giovanni, and the morning after came to Piacenza. That city, (though the capital of a dutchy) made so frippery an appearance, that instead of spending some days there, as had been intended, we only dined, and went on to Parma; stayed there all the following day, which was passed in visiting the famous works of Corregio in the Dome, and other churches.—The fine gallery of pictures, that once belonged to the dukes of Parma, is no more here; the king of Naples has carried it all thither, and the city had not merit enough to detain us any longer, so we proceeded through Reggio to Modena; this, though the residence of its duke, is an ill-built melancholy place, all of brick, as are most of the towns in this part of Lombardy: he himself lives in a private manner, with very little appearance of a court about him; he has one of the noblest collections of paintings in the world, which entertained us extremely well the rest of that day and part of the next: and in the afternoon we came to Bologna: so now you may wish us joy of being in the dominions of his Holiness. This is a populous city, and of great extent: all the streets have porticos on both sides, such as surround a part of Covent-Garden, a great relief in summer-time in such a climate; and from one of the principal gates to a church of the Virgin, (where is a wonder-working picture, at three miles distance) runs a corridor of the same sort, lately finished, and, indeed, a most extraordinary performance. The churches here are more remarkable for their paintings than architecture, being mostly old structures of brick; but the palaces are numerous, and fine enough to supply us with somewhat worth seeing from morning till night. The country of Lombardy, hitherto, is one of the most beautiful imaginable; the roads broad, and exactly straight, and on either hand vast plantations of trees, chiefly mulberries and olives, and not a tree without a vine twining about it and spreading among its branches. This scene, indeed, which must be the most lovely in the world during the proper season, is at present all deformed by the winter, which here is rigorous enough for the time it lasts; but one still sees the skeleton of a charming place, and reaps the benefit of its product; for the fruits and provisions are admirable: in short, you find every thing that luxury can desire, in perfection. We have now been here a week, and shall stay some little time longer. We are at the foot of the Apennine mountains; it will take up three days to cross them, and then we shall come to Florence, where we shall pass the Christmas. Till then we must remain in a state of ignorance as to what is doing in England, for our letters are to meet us there: if I do not find four or five from you alone, I shall wonder.

XXVI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Dec. 19, N. S. 1739.

We spent twelve days at Bologna, chiefly (as most travellers do) in seeing sights; for as we knew no mortal there, and as it is no easy matter to get admission into any Italian house, without very particular recommendations, we could see no company but in public places; and there are none in that city but the churches. We saw, therefore, churches, palaces, and pictures from morning to night; and the 15th of this month set out for Florence, and began to cross the Appenine mountains; we travelled among and upon them all that day, and, as it was but indifferent weather were commonly in the middle of thick clouds, that utterly deprived us of a sight of their beauties: for this vast chain of hills has its beauties, and all the valleys are cultivated; even the mountains themselves are many of them so within a little of their very tops. They are not so horrid as the Alps, though pretty near as high; and the whole road is admirably well kept, and paved throughout, which is a length of fourscore miles, and more. We left the pope's dominions, and lay that night in those of the grand duke of Fiorenzuola, a paltry little town, at the foot of mount Giogo, which is the highest of them all

Next morning we went up it; the post house is upon its very top, and usually involved in clouds, or half-buried in the snow. Indeed there was none of the last at the time we were there, but it was still a dismal habitation. The descent is most excessively steep, and the turnings very short and frequent: however we performed it without any danger, and in coming down could dimly discover Florence, and the beautiful plain about it, through the mists; but enough to convince us, it must be one of the noblest prospects upon earth in summer. That afternoon we got thither: and Mr. Mann,* the resident, had sent his servant to meet us at the gates, and conduct us to his house. He is the best and most obliging person in the world. The next night we were introduced at the prince of Craon's assembly (he has the chief power here in the grand duke's absence.)—The princess, and he, were extremely civil to the name of Walpole, so we were asked to stay supper, which is as much as to say, you may come and sup here whenever you please; for after the first invitation this is always understood. We have also been at the countess Suarez's, a favourite of the late duke, and one that gives the first movement to every thing gay that is going forward here. The news is every day expected from Vienna of the great dutchess's delivery; if it be a boy here will be all sorts of balls, masquerades, operas, and illuminations; if not, we must wait for the carnival, when all those things come of course. In the mean time, it is impossible to want entertainment; the famous gallery, alone, is an amusement for months: we commonly pass two or three hours every morning in it, and one has perfect leisure to consider all its beauties. You know it contains many hundred antique statues, such as the whole world cannot match, besides the vast collection of paintings, medals, and precious stones, such as no other prince was ever master of; in short, all that the rich and powerful house of Medicis has, in so many years got together. And besides this city abounds with so many palaces and churches, that you can hardly place yourself any where without having some fine one in view, or at least some statue or fountain, magnificently adorned; these undoubtedly are far more numerous than Genoa can pretend to; yet, in its general appearance, I cannot think that Florence equals it in beauty. Mr. Walpole is just come from being presented to the electress palatine dowager; she is a sister of the late great duke's; a stately old lady, that never goes out but to church, and then she has guards, and eight horses to her coach. She received him with much ceremony, standing under a huge black canopy, and, after a few minutes' talking, she assured him of her good will, and dismissed him; she never sees any body but thus in form; and so she passes her life, *poor woman! * * *

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* Afterwards Sir Horace Mann.

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* Persons of very high rank, and withal very good sense, will only feel the pathos of this exclamation.

XXVII.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, Jan. 15, 1740.

I THINK I have not yet told you how we left that charming place Genoa; how we crossed a mountain all of green marble, called Buchetto; how we came to Tortona, and waded through the mud to come to Castel St. Giovanni, and there eat mustard and sugar with a dish of crows' gizzards: secondly, how we passed the famous plains

> Qua trebie glaucas salices intersecat undâ,
> Arvaque Romanis nobilitata malis.
> Visus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere,
> Et suspirantes ducere mœstus aquas;
> Maurorumque ala, et nigræ increbrescere turmæ,
> Et pulsa Ausonidûm ripa sonare fugâ.

Nor, thirdly, how we passed through Piacenza, Parma, Modena, entered the territories of the pope; stayed twelve days at Bologna; crossed the Appenines, and afterwards arrived at Florence. None of these things have I told you, nor do I intend to tell you, till you ask me some questions concerning them. No, not even of Florence itself, except that it is as fine as possible, and has every thing in it that can bless the eyes. But, before I enter into particulars, you must make your peace both with me and the Venus de Medicis, who, let me tell you, is highly and justly offended at you for not inquiring, long before this, concerning her symmetry and proportions. * * *

XXVIII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, March 19, 1740.

THE pope* is at last dead, and we are to set out for Rome on Monday next. The conclave is still sitting there, and likely to continue so some time longer, as the two French cardinals are but just arrived, and the German ones are still expected. It agrees mighty ill with those that remain enclosed: Ottoboni is already dead of an apoplexy; Altieri and several others are said to be dying, or very bad: yet it is not expected to break up till after Easter. We shall lie at Sienna the first night, spend a day there, and in two more get to Rome. One begins to see in this country the first promises of an Italian spring, clear unclouded skies, and warm suns, such as are not often felt in England; yet, for your sake, I hope at present you have your proportion of them, and that all your frosts, and snows, and short-breaths, are by this time, utterly vanished. I have nothing new or particular to inform you of; and, if you see things at home go on much in their old course, you must not imagine them more various abroad. The diversions of a Florentine Lent are composed of a sermon in the morning, full of hell and the devil; a dinner at noon, full of fish and meagre diet; and, in the evening, what is called a conversazione, a sort of assembly at the principal people's houses, full of I cannot tell what: besides this, there is twice a week a very grand concert.***

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* Clement the Twelfth.

XXIX.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 2d, N. S. 1740.

This is the third day since we came to Rome, but the first hour I have had to write to you in. The journey from Florence cost us four days, one of which was spent at Sienna, an agreeable, clean, old city, of no great magnificence or extent; but in a fine situation and good air. What it has most considerable is its cathedral, a huge pile of marble, black and white laid alternately, and laboured with a Gothic niceness and delicacy in the old-fashioned way. Within too are some paintings and sculpture of considerable hands. The sight of this, and some collections that were showed us in private houses, were a sufficient employment for the little time we were to pass there; and the next morning we set forward on our journey through a country very oddly composed; for some miles you have a continual scene of little mountains cultivated from top to bottom with rows of olive trees, or else elms, each of which has its vine twining about it, and mixing with the branches; and corn sown between all the ranks. This, diversified with numerous small houses and convents, makes the most agreeable prospect in the world: but, all of a sudden, it alters to black barren hills, as far as the eye can reach, that seem never to have been capable of culture, and are as ugly as useless. Such is the country for some time before one comes to Mount Radicofani, a terrible black hill, on the top of which we were to lodge that night. It is very high, and difficult of ascent; and at the foot of it we were much embarrassed by the fall of one of the poor horses that drew us. This accident obliged another chaise, which was coming down, to stop also; and out of it peeped a figure in a red cloak, with a handkerchief tied round its head, which, by its voice and mien, seemed a fat old woman; but upon its getting out, appeared to be Senesino, who was returning from Naples to Sienna, the place of his birth and residence. On the highest part of the mountain is an old fortress, and near it a house built by one of the grand dukes for a hunting-seat, but now converted into an inn: it is the shell of a large fabric, but such an inside, such chambers and accommodations, that your cellar is a palace in comparison; and your cat sups and lies much better than we did; for, it being a saint's eve, there was nothing but eggs. We devoured our meager fare; and, after stopping up the windows with the quilts, were obliged to lie upon the straw beds in our clothes. Such are the conveniences in a road, that is, as it were, the great thoroughfare of all the world. Just on the other side of this mountain, at Ponte-Centino, one enters the patrimony of the church; a most delicious country, but thinly inhabited. That night brought us to Viterbo, a city of a more lively appearance than any we had lately met with, the houses have glass windows, which is not very usual here; and most of the streets are terminated by a handsome fountain. Here we had the pleasure of breaking our fast on the leg of an old hare and some broiled crows. Next morning, in descending Mount Viterbo, we first discovered (though at near thirty miles distance) the cupola of St. Peter's, and a little after began to enter on an old Roman pavement, with now and then a ruined tower, or a sepulchre on each hand. We now had a clear view of the city, though not to the best advantage, as coming along a plain quite upon a level with it; however, it appeared very vast, and surrounded with magnificent villas and gardens. We soon after crossed the Tiber, a river that ancient Rome made more considerable than any merit of its own could have done: however, it is not contemptibly small, but a good handsome stream; very deep, yet somewhat of a muddy complexion. The first entrance of Rome is prodigiously striking. It is by a noble gate, designed by Michael Angelo, and adorned with statues; this brings you into a large square, in the midst of which is a vast obelisk of granite, and in front you have at one view two churches of a handsome architecture, and so much alike, that they are called the Twins; with three streets, the middlemost of which is one of the longest in Rome. As high as my expectation was raised, I confess, the magnificence of this city infinitely surpasses it. You cannot pass along a street, but you have views of some palace, or church, or square, or fountain, the most picturesque and noble one can imagine. We have not yet set about considering its beauties, ancient and modern, with attention; but have already taken a slight transient view of some of the most remarkable. St. Peter's I saw the day after we arrived, and was struck dumb with wonder. I there saw the cardinal D'Auvergne, one of the French ones, who, upon coming off his journey, immediately repaired hither to offer up his vows at the high altar, and went directly into the conclave; the doors of which we saw opened to him, and all the other immured cardinals came thither to receive him. Upon his entrance they were closed again directly. It is supposed they will not come to an agreement about a pope till after Easter, though the confinement is very disagreeable. I have hardly philosophy enough to see the infinity of fine things, that are here daily in the power of any body that has money, without regretting the want of it; but custom has the power of making things easy to one. I have not yet seen his majesty of Great Britain, &c. though I have the two boys in the gardens of the Villa Borgese, where they go a shooting almost every day; it was at a distance, indeed, for we did not choose to meet them, as you may imagine. This letter (like all those the English send, or receive) will pass through the hands of that family, before it comes to those it was intended for. They do it more honour than it deserves; and all they will learn from thence will be, that I desire you to give my duty to my father, and wherever else it is due, and that I am, &c.

XXX.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Rome, April 15, 1740. Good-Friday.

To-day I am just come from paying my adoration at St. Peter's to three extraordinary relics, which are exposed to public view only on these two days in the whole year, at which time all the confraternities in the city come in procession to see them. It was something extremely novel to see that vast church, and the most magnificent in the world, undoubtedly, illuminated (for it was night) by thousands of little crystal lamps, disposed in the figure of a huge cross at the high altar, and seeming to hang alone in the air. All the light proceeded from this, and had the most singular effect imaginable as one entered the great door. Soon after came one after another, I believe, thirty processions, all dressed in linen frocks, and girt with a cord, their heads covered with a cowl all over, only two holes to see through left. Some of them were all black, others red, others white, others party-coloured; these were continually coming and going with their tapers and crucifixes before them; and to each company, as they arrived and knelt before the great altar, were shown from a balcony, at a great height, the three wonders, which are, you must know, the head of the spear that wounded Christ; St. Veronica's handkerchief, with the miraculous impression of his face upon it: and a piece of the true cross, on the sight of which the people thump their breasts, and kiss the pavement with vast devotion. The tragical part of the ceremony is half a dozen wretched creatures, who, with their faces covered, but naked to the waist, are in a side-chapel disciplining themselves with scourges full of iron prickles; but really in earnest, as our eyes can testify, which saw their backs and arms so raw, we should have taken it for a red satin doublet torn, and showing the skin through, had we not been convinced of the contrary by the blood which was plentifully sprinkled about them. It is late; I give you joy of Porto-Bello, and many other things, which I hope are all true. * * *

XXXI.

TO MR. WEST.

Tivoli, May 20, 1740.

This day being in the palace of his highness the duke of Modena, he laid his most serene commands upon me to write to Mr. West, and said he thought it for his glory, that I should draw up an inventory of all his most serene possessions for the said West's perusal.———Imprimis, a house, being in circumference a quarter of a mile, two feet and an inch; the said house containing the following particulars, to wit, a great room. Item, another great room; item, a bigger room; item, another room; item, a vast room; item, a sixth of the same; a seventh ditto; an eighth as before; a ninth as abovesaid; a tenth (see No. 1.;) item, ten more such, besides twenty besides, which, not to be too particular, we shall pass over. The said rooms contain nine chairs, two tables, five stools, and a cricket. From whence we shall proceed to the garden, containing two millions of superfine laurel hedges, a clump of cypress trees, and half the river Teverone, that pisses into two thousand several chamberpots. Finis.—Dame Nature desired me to put in a list of her little goods and chattels, and, as they were small, to be very minute about them. She has built here three or four little mountains, and laid them out in an irregular semicircle; from certain others behind, at a greater distance, she has drawn a canal, into which she has put a little river of hers, called Anio; she has cut a huge cleft between the two innermost of her four hills, and there she has left it to its own disposal; which she has no sooner done, but, like a heedless chit, it tumbles headlong down a declivity fifty feet perpendicular, breaks itself all to shatters, and is converted into a shower of rain, where the sun forms many a bow, red, green, blue, and yellow. To get out of our metaphors without any further trouble, it is the most noble sight in the world. The weight of that quantity of waters, and the force they fall with, have worn the rocks they throw themselves among into a thousand irregular crags, and to a vast depth. In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noise till it comes to another steep, where you see it a second time come roaring down (but first you must walk two miles farther) a greater height than before, but not with that quantity of waters; for by this time it has divided itself, being crossed and opposed by the rocks, into four several streams, each of which, in emulation of the great one, will tumble down too; and it does tumble down, but not from an equally elevated place; so that you have at one view all these cascades intermixed with groves of olive and little woods, the mountains rising behind them, and on the top of one (that which forms the extremity of one of the half-circle's horns) is seated the town itself. At the very extremity of that extremity, on the brink of the precipice, stands the Sibyl's temple, the remains of a little rotunda, surrounded with its portico, above half of whose beautiful Corinthian pillars are still standing and entire; all this on one hand. On the other, the open campagna of Rome, here and there a little castle on a hillock, and the city itself on the very brink of the horizon, indistinctly seen (being eighteen miles off) except the dome of St. Peter's; which, if you look out of your window, wherever you are, I suppose, you can see. I did not tell you that a little below the first fall, on the side of the rock, and hanging over that torrent, are little ruins which they show you for Horace's house, a curious situation to observe the

"Præceps Anio, et Tiburni lucus, et uda
Mobilibus pomaria rivis."

Mæcenas did not care for such a noise, it seems, and built him a house (which they also carry one to see) so situated that it sees nothing at all of the matter, and for any thing he knew there might be no such river in the world. Horace had another house on the other side of the Teverone, opposite to Mæcenas's; and they told us there was a bridge of communication, by which "andava il detto Signor per trastullarsi coll istesso Orazio." In coming hither we crossed the Aquæ Albulæ, a vile little brook that stinks like a fury, and they say it has stunk so these thousand years. I forget the Piscina of Quintilius Varus, where he used to keep certain little fishes. This is very entire, and there is a piece of the aqueduct that supplied it too; in the garden below is old Rome, built in little, just as it was, they say. There are seven temples in it, and no houses at all: they say there were none.

May. 21.

We have had the pleasure of going twelve miles out of our way to Palestrina. It has rained all day as if heaven and us were coming together. See my honesty, I do not mention a syllable of the temple of Fortune, because I really did not see it; which, I think, is pretty well for an old traveller. So we returned along the Via Prænestina, saw the Lacus Gabinus and Regillus, where, you know, Castor and Pollux appeared upon a certain occasion. And many a good old tomb we left on each hand, and many an aqueduct,

Dumb are whose fountains, and their channels dry.

There are, indeed, two whole modern ones, works of popes, that run about thirty miles a-piece in length; one of them conveys still the famous Aqua Virgo to Rome, and adds vast beauty to the prospect. So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendidissimo regalo of letters: in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring. I would have you to know, I expect you should take a handsome crow-quill when you write to me, and not leave room for a pin's point in four sides of a sheet royal. Do you but find matter, I will find spectacles.

I have more time than I thought, and I will employ it in telling you about a ball that we were at the other evening. Figure to yourself a Roman villa; all its little apartments thrown open, and lighted up to the best advantage. At the upper end of the gallery, a fine concert, in which La Diamantina, a famous virtousa, played on the violin divinely, and sung angelically; Giovannino and Pasqualini (great names in musical story) also performed miraculously. On each side were ranged all the secular grand monde of Rome, the ambassadors. princesses, and all that. Among the rest Il Serenissimo Pretendente (as the Montova gazette calls him) displayed his rueful length of person, with his two young ones, and all his ministry around him. "Poi nacque un grazioso ballo," where the world danced, and I sat in a corner regaling myself with iced fruits, and other pleasant rinfrescatives.

XXXII.

TO MR. WEST.

Rome, May, 1740.

I am to-day just returned from Alba, a good deal fatigued; for you know the Appian is somewhat tiresome.* We dined at Pompey's; he indeed was gone for a few days to his Tusculan, but, by the care of his villicus, we made an admirable meal. We had the dugs of a pregnant sow, a peacock, a dish of thrushes, a noble scarus, just fresh from the Tyrrhene, and some conchylia of the lake with garum sauce: for my part I never eat better at Lucullus's table. We drank half a dozen cyathi a-piece of ancient Alban to Pholoë's health; and, after bathing, and playing an hour at ball, we mounted our essedum again, and proceeded up the mount to the temple. The priests there entertained us with an account of a wonderful shower of birds' eggs, that had fallen two days before, which had no sooner touched the ground, but they were converted into gudgeons; as also that the night past a dreadful voice had been heard out of the adytum, which spoke Greek during a full half hour, but nobody understood it. But quitting my Romanities, to your great joy and mine, let me tell you, in plain English, that we come from Albano. The present town lies within the enclosure of Pompey's villa in ruins. The Appian way runs through it, by the side of which, a little farther, is a large old tomb, with five pyramids upon it, which the learned suppose to be the burying-place of the family, because they do not know whose it can be else. But the vulgar assure you it is the sepulchre of the Curiatii, and by that name (such is their power) it goes. One drives to Castel Gondolfo, a house of the pope's, situated on the top of one of the Collinette, that forms a brim to the basin commonly called the Alban lake. It is seven miles round; and directly opposite to you, on the other side, rises the Mons Albanus, much taller than the rest, along whose side are still discoverable (not to common eyes) certain little ruins of the old Alba Longa. They had need be very little, as having been nothing but ruins ever since the days of Tullus Hostilius. On its top is a house of the constable Colonna's, where stood the temple of Jupiter Latialis. At the foot of the hill Gondolfo, are the famous outlets of the lake, built with hewn stone, a mile and a half under ground. Livy, you know, amply informs us of the foolish occasion of this expense, and gives me this opportunity of displaying all my erudition, that I may appear considerable in your eyes. This is the prospect from one window of the palace. From another you have the whole campagna, the city, Antium, and the Tyrrhene sea (twelve miles distant) so distinguishable, that you may see the vessels sailing upon it. All this is charming. Mr. Walpole says, our memory sees more than our eyes in this country, which is extremely true; since, for realities, Windsor, or Richmond Hill, is infinitely preferable to Albano or Frescati. I am now at home, and going to the window to tell you it is the most beautiful of Italian nights, which, in truth, are but just begun, (so backward has the spring been here, and every where else, they say.) There is a moon! there are stars for you! Do not you hear the fountain? Do not you smell the orange flowers? That building yonder is the convent of St. Isidore; and that eminence, with the cypress trees and pines upon it, the top of M. Quirinal.—This is all true, and yet my prospect is not two hundred yards in length. We send you some Roman inscriptions to entertain you. The first two are modern, transcribed from the Vatican library by Mr. Walpole.

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* However whimsical this humour may appear to some readers, I chose to insert it, as it gives me an opportunity of remarking that Mr. Gray was extremely skilled in the customs of the ancient Romans; and has catalogued, in his common-place book, their various eatables, wines, perfumes, clothes, medicines, &c. with great precision, referring under every article to passages in the poets and historians where their names are mentioned.

Pontifices olim quem fundavêre priores,
  Præciquâ Sixtus perficit arte tholum;*
Et Sixti tantum se gloria tollit in altum,
  Quantum se Sixti nobile tollit opus:
Magnus bonos magni fundamina ponere templi,
  Sed finem cœptis ponere major honos.

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* Sixtus V. built the dome of St. Peter's.

Saxa agit Amphion, Thebana utimœnia condat:
Sixtus et immensæ pondera molis agit.*
Saxa trahunt ambo longe diversa: sed arte
Hæe trahit Amphion; Sixtus et arte trahit.
At tantum exsuperat Dircæum Amphiona Sixtus,
Quantum hic exsuperat cætera saxa lapis.

Mine is ancient, and I think not less curious. It is exactly transcribed from a sepulchral marble at the villa Giustiniani. I put stops to it, when I understand it.

DIs Manibus
Claudiae, Pistes
Primus Conjugi
Optumæ, Sanctae,
Et Piae, Benemeritate.

Non æquos, Parcae, statuistis stamina vitæ.
Jam bene compositos potuistis sede tenere.
Amissa est conjux, cur ego et ipse moror?
Si · bella · esse · mî · iste · mea · vivere · debuilt ·
Tristia contigerunt qui amissâ conjuge vivo.
Nil est tam miserum, quam totam perdere vitam.
Nec vita enasci dura peregistis crudelia pensa, sorores,
Ruptaque deficiunt in primo munere fusi.
O nimis injustæ ter denos dare munus in annos,
Deceptus · grautus · fatum · sic · pressit · egestas ·
Dum vitam tulero, Primus Pistes lugea conjugium.

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* He raised the obelisk in the great area.

XXXIII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Naples, June 17, 1740.

Our journey hither was through the most beautiful part of the finest country in the world; and every spot of it, on some account or other, famous for these three thousand years past.* The season has hitherto been just as warm as one would wish it; no unwholesome airs, or violent heats, yet heard of: The people call it a backward year, and are in pain about their corn, wine, and oil; but we, who are neither corn, wine, nor oil, find it very agreeable. Our road was through Velletri, Cisterna, Terracina, Capua, and Aversa, and so to Naples. The minute one leaves his holiness's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide uncultivated plains to olive groves and well-tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in festoons between the rows from one tree to another. The great old fig-trees, the oranges in full bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfulest scenes you can conceive; besides that, the roads are wide, well-kept, and full of passengers, a sight

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* Mr. Gray wrote a minute description of every thing he saw in this tour from Rome to Naples; as also of the environs of Rome, Florence, &c But as these papers are apparently only memorandums for his own use, I do not think it necessary to print them, although they abound with many uncommon remarks, and pertinent classical quotations.

I have not beheld this long time. My wonder still increased upon entering the city, which, I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and London. The streets are one continued market, and thronged with populace so much that a coach can hardly pass. The common sort are a jolly lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are; they work till evening; then take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the sea-shore with it, to enjoy the fresco. One sees their little brown children jumping about stark-naked, and the bigger ones dancing with castanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. Your maps will show you the situation of Naples; it is on the most lovely bay in the world, and one of the calmest seas: it has many other beauties besides those of nature. We have spent two days in visiting the remarkable places in the country round it, such as the bay of Baiæ, and its remains of antiquity; the lake Avernus, and the Solfatara, Charon's grotto, &c. We have been in the Sibyl's cave and many other strange holes under-ground (I only name them, because you may consult Sandy's travels;) but the strangest hole I ever was in, has been to-day, of a place called Portici, where his Sicilian Majesty has a country-seat. About a year ago, as they were digging, they discovered some parts of ancient buildings above thirty feet deep in the ground: curiosity led them on, and they have been digging ever since; the passage they have made, with all its turnings and windings, is now more than a mile long. As you walk, you see parts of an amphitheatre, many houses adorned with marble columns, and incrusted with the same; the front of a temple, several arched vaults of rooms painted in fresco. Some pieces of painting have been taken out from hence, finer than any thing of the kind before discovered, and with these the king has adorned his palace; also a number of statues, medals, and gems; and more are dug out every day. This is known to be a Roman town,* that in the emperor Titus's time was overwhelmed by a furious eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is hard by.—The wood and beams remain so perfect that you may see the grain; but burnt to a coal, and dropping into dust upon the least touch. We were to-day at the foot of that mountain, which at present only smokes a little, where we saw the materials that fed the stream of fire, which about four years since ran down its side. We have but a few days longer to stay here; too little in conscience for such a place. * * *

XXXIV.

TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

At my return to this city, the day before yesterday, I had the pleasure of finding yours dated June the 9th. The period of our voyages, at least towards the South, is come as you wish. We have been at Naples, spent nine or ten days there, and returned to

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* It should seem, by the omission of its name, that it was not then discovered to be Herculaneum.

Rome, where finding no likelihood of a pope yet these three months, and quite wearied with the formal assemblies, and little society of that great city, Mr. Walpole determined to return hither to spend the summer, where he imagines he shall pass his time more agreeably than in the tedious expectation of what, when it happens, will only be a great show. For my own part, I give up the thoughts of all that with but little regret; but the city itself I do not part with so easily, which alone has amusements for whole years. However, I have passed through all that most people do, both ancient and modern; what that is you may see, better than I can tell you, in a thousand books. The conclave we left in greater uncertainty than ever; the more than ordinary liberty they enjoy there, and the unusual coolness of the season, makes the confinement less disagreeable to them than common, and, consequently, maintains them in their irresolution. There have been very high words, one or two (it is said) have come even to blows; two more are dead within this last month, Cenci and Portia; the latter died distracted; and we left another (Altiera) at the extremity: yet nobody dreams of an election till the latter end of September. All this gives great scandal to all good catholicks, and every body talks very freely on the subject. The Pretender (whom you desire an account of) I have had frequent opportunities of seeing at church, at the corso, and other places; but more particularly, and that for a whole night, at a great ball given by count Patrizii to the prince and princess Craon, (who were come to Rome at that time, that he might receive from the hands of the emperor's ministers there the order of the golden fleece) at which he and his two sons were present. They are good fine boys, especially the younger, who has the more spirit of the two, and both danced incessantly all night long. For him, he is a thin ill-made man, extremely tall and awkward, of a most unpromising countenance, a good deal resembling king James the second, and has extremely the air and look of an idiot, particularly when he laughs or prays. The first he does not often, the latter continually. He lives private enough with his little court about him, consisting of lord Dunbar, who manages every thing, and two or three of the Preston Scotch lords, who would be very glad to make their peace at home.

We happened to be at Naples on Corpus Christi day, the greatest feast in the year, so had an opportunity of seeing their Sicilian majesties to advantage. The king walked in the grand procession, and the queen (being big with child) sat in a balcony. He followed the host to the church of St. Clara, where high mass was celebrated to a glorious concert of music. They are as ugly a little pair as one can see: she a pale girl, marked with the small-pox; and he a brown boy with a thin face, a huge nose, and as ungain as possible.

We are settled here with Mr. Mann, in a charming apartment; the river Arno runs under our windows, which we can fish out of. The sky is so serene, and the air so temperate, that one continues in the open air all night long in a slight night gown, without any danger; and the marble bridge is the resort of every body, where they hear music, eat iced fruits, and sup by moonlight; though as yet (the season being extremely backward every where) these amusements are not begun. You see we are now coming northward again, though in no great haste; the Venetian and Milanese territories, and either Germany or the south of France (according to the turn the war may take,) are all that remain for us, that we have not yet seen; as to Loretto, and that part of Italy, we have given over all thoughts of it.

XXXV.

FROM MR. WEST.

Bond-Street, June 5, 1740.

I LIVED at the Temple till I was sick of it: I have just left it, and find myself as much a lawyer as I was when I was in it. It is certain, at least, I may study the law here as well as I could there. My being in chambers did not signify to me a pinch of snuff. They tell me my father was a lawyer, and, as you know, eminent in the profession; and such a circumstance must be of advantage to me. My uncle too makes some figure in Westminster-hall; and there's another advantage: then my grandfather's name would get me many friends. Is it not strange that a young fellow, that might enter the world with so many advantages, will not know his own interest? &c. &c. What shall I say in answer to all this? For money, I neither dote upon it nor despise it; it is a necessary stuff enough. For ambition, I do not want that neither; but it is not to sit upon a bench. In short, is it not a disagreeable thing to force one's inclination, especially when one's young? not to mention that one ought to have the strength of a Hercules to go through our common law; which, I am afraid, I have not. Well! but then, say they, if one profession does not suit you, you may choose another more to your inclination. Now I protest I do not yet know my own inclination, and I believe, if that was to be my direction, I should never fix at all. There is no going by a weather-cock. I could say much more upon this subject; but there is no talking tête-à-tête cross the Alps. Oh, the folly of young men, that never know their own interest! they never grow wise till they are ruined! and then nobody pities them, nor helps them. Dear Gray! consider me in the condition of one that has lived these two years without any person that he can speak freely to. I know it is very seldom that people trouble themselves with the sentiments of those they converse with; so they can chat about trifles, they never care whether your heart aches or no. Are you one of these? I think not. But what right have I to ask you this question? Have we known one another enough, that I should expect or demand sincerity from you? Yes, Gray, I hope we have; and I have not quite such a mean opinion of myself, as to think I do not deserve it.

But, signor, is it not time for me to ask something about your future intentions abroad? Where do you propose going next? an in Apuliam? nam illo si adveneris, tanquam Ulysses, cognosces tuorum neminem. Vale. So Cicero prophesies in the end of one of his letters—and there I end.

Yours, &c.

XXXVI.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

You do yourself and me justice, in imagining that you merit, and that I am capable of sincerity. I have not a thought, or even a weakness, I desire to conceal from you; and consequently on my side deserve to be treated with the same openness of heart. My vanity perhaps might make me more reserved towards you, if you were one of the heroic race, superior to all human failings; but as mutual wants are the ties of general society, so are mutual weaknesses of private friendships, supposing them mixed with some proportion of good qualities; for where one may not sometimes blame, one does not much care ever to praise. All this has the air of an introduction designed to soften a very harsh reproof that is to follow; but it is no such matter: I only meant to ask, why did you change your lodging? Was the air bad, or the situation melancholy? If so, you are quite in the right. Only, is it not putting yourself a little out of the way of a people, with whom it seems necessary to keep up some sort of intercourse and conversation, though but little for your pleasure or entertainment (yet there are, I believe, such among them as might give you both,) at least for your information in that study, which, when I left you, you thought of applying to? for that there is a certain study necessary to be followed, if we mean to be of any use in the world, I take for granted; disagreeable enough (as most necessities are,) but, I am afraid, unavoidable. Into how many branches these studies are divided in England, every body knows; and between that which you and I had pitched upon, and the other two, it was impossible to balance long. Examples show one that it is not absolutely necessary to be a blockhead to succeed in this profession. The labour is long, and the elements dry and unentertaining; nor was ever any body (especially those that afterwards made a figure in it) amused, or even not disgusted, in the beginning; yet, upon a further acquaintance, there is surely matter for curiosity and reflection. It is strange if, among all that huge mass of words, there be not somewhat intermixed for thought. Laws have been the result of long deliberation, and that not of dull men, but the contrary; and have so close a connexion with history, nay, with philosophy itself, that they must partake a little of what they are related to so nearly. Besides, tell me, have you ever made the attempt? Was not you frighted merely with the distant prospect? Had the Gothic character and bulkiness of those volumes (a tenth part of which perhaps it will be no further necessary to consult, than as one does a dictionary) no ill effect upon your eye? Are you sure, if Coke had been printed by Elzevir, and bound in twenty neat pocket volumes, instead of one folio, you should never have taken him up for an hour, as you would a Tully, or drank your tea over him? I know how great an obstacle ill spirits are to resolution. Do you really think, if you rid ten miles every morning, in a week's time you should not entertain much stronger hopes of the chancellorship, and think it a much more probable thing than you do at present? The advantages you mention are not nothing; our inclinations are more than we imagine in our own power; reason and resolution determine them, and support under many difficulties. To me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and a private one; he who prefers the first, must put himself in a way of being serviceable to the rest of mankind, if he has a mind to be of any consequence among them: nay, he must not refuse being in a certain degree even dependent upon some men who already are so. If he has the good fortune to light on such as will make no ill use of his humility, there is no shame in this: if not, his ambition ought to give place to a reasonable pride, and he should apply to the cultivation of his own mind those abilities which he has not been permitted to use for others' service. Such a private happiness (supposing a small competence of fortune) is almost always in every one's power, and the proper enjoyment of age, as the other is the employment of youth. You are yet young, have some advantages and opportunities, and an undoubted capacity, which you have never yet put to the trial. Set apart a few hours, see how the first year will agree with you, at the end of it you are still the master; if you change your mind, you will only have got the knowledge of a little somewhat that can do no hurt, or give you cause of repentance. If your inclination be not fixed upon any thing else, it is a symptom that you are not absolutely determined against this, and warns you not to mistake mere indolence for inability. I am sensible there is nothing stronger against what I would persuade you to, than my own practice; which may make you imagine I think not as I speak. Alas! it is not so; but I do not act what I think, and I had rather be the object of your pity than that you should be that of mine; and, be assured, the advantage I may receive from it, does not diminish my concern in hearing you want somebody to converse with freely, whose advice might be of more weight, and always at hand. We have some time since come to the southern period of our voyages; we spent about nine days at Naples. It is the largest and most populous city, as its environs are the most deliciously fertile country, of all Italy. We sailed in the bay of Baiæ, sweated in the Solfatara, and died in the grotto del Cane, as all strangers do; saw the Corpus Christi procession, and the king and the queen, and the city underground (which is a wonder I reserve to tell you of another time) and so returned to Rome for another fortnight; left it (left Rome!) and came hither for the summer. You have seen an Epistle* to Mr. Ashton, that seems to me full of spirit and thought, and a good deal of poetic fire. I would know your opinion. Now I talk of verses, Mr. Walpole and I have frequently wondered you should never mention a certain imitation of Spencer, published last year by a namesake† of yours, with which we are all enraptured and enmarvailed.

XXXVII.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Florence, Aug. 21, N. S. 1740.

It is some time since I have had the pleasure of writing to you, having been upon a little excursion cross the mountains to Bologna. We set out from hence at sunset, passed the Appennines by moon-light, travelling incessantly till we came to Bologna at four in the afternoon next day. There we spent a week agreeably enough, and returned as we came. The day before yesterday arrived the news of a pope: and I have the mortification of being within four days' journey of Rome, and not seeing his coronation, the heats being violent, and the infectious air now at its height. We had an instance, the other day, that it is not only fancy. Two country fellows, strong men, and used to the country about Rome, having occasion to come from thence hither, and travelling on foot, as common with them, one died suddenly on the road; the other got hither, but extremely weak, and in a manner stupid; he was carried to the hospital, but died in two days. So, between fear and laziness, we remain here, and must be satisfied with the accounts other people give us of the matter. The new pope is called Benedict XIV. being created cardinal by Benedict XIII. the last pope but one. His name is Lambertini, a noble Bolognese, and archbishop of that city. When I was first there, I remember to have seen him two or three times; he is a short, fat man, about sixty-five years of age, of a hearty, merry countenance, and likely to live some years. He bears a good character for generosity, affability, and other virtues; and, they say, wants neither knowledge nor capacity. The worst side of him is, that he has a nephew or two; besides a certain young favourite, called Melara, who is said to have had, for some time, the arbitrary disposal of his purse and family. He is reported to have made a little speech to the cardinals in the conclave, while they were undetermined about an election, as follows: "Most eminent lords, here are three Bolognese of different characters, but all equally proper for the popedom. If it be your pleasure to pitch upon a saint, there is cardinal Gotti; if upon a politician, there is Aldrovandi; if upon a booby, here am I." The Italian is much more expressive, and, indeed not to be translated; wherefore, if you meet with any body that understands it, you may show them what he said in the language he spoke it. "Emin^{ssimi}, Sigr^{i}. Ci siamo tré, diversi sì, mà tutti idonei al Papato. Se vi piace un Santo, c' è l'Gotti; se volete una testa scaltra, e Politica, c' è l'Aldrovandè; se un Coglione, ecco mi!" Cardinal Coscia is restored to his liberty, and, it is said, will be to all his benefices. Corsini (the late pope's nephew) as he has had no hand in this election, it is hoped, will be called to account for all his villanous practices. The Pretender, they say, has resigned all his pretensions to his eldest boy, and will accept of the grand chancellorship, which is thirty thousand crowns a-year; the pension he has at present is only twenty thousand. I do not affirm the truth of this last article; because, if he does, it is necessary he should take the ecclesiastical habit, and it will sound mighty odd to be called his majesty the chancellor.—So ends my gazette.

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* The reader will find this among Mr. Walpole's Fugitive Pieces.

† "On the Abuse of Travelling," by Gilbert West.

XXXVIII.

TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, Oct. 9, 1740.

The beginning of next spring is the time determined for our return at furthest; possibly it may be before that time. How the interim will be employed, or what route we shall take, is not so certain. If we remain friends with France, upon leaving this country we shall cross over to Venice, and so return through the cities north of the Po to Genoa; from thence take a felucca to Marseilles, and come back through Paris. If the contrary fall out, which seems not unlikely, we must take the Milanese, and those parts of Italy, in our way to Venice; from thence must pass through the Tyrol into Germany, and come home by the Low-Countries. As for Florence, it has been gayer than ordinary for this last month, being one round of balls and entertainments, occasioned by the arrival of a great Milanese lady; for the only thing the Italians shine in, is their reception of strangers. At such times every thing is magnificence: the more remarkable, as in their ordinary course of life they are parsimonious, even to a degree of nastiness. I saw in one of the vastest palaces in Rome, that of prince Pamfilio, the apartment which he himself inhabited, a bed that most servants in England would disdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a soph at Cambridge, for convenience and neatness. This man is worth 30,000*l.* sterling a year. As for eating, there are not two cardinals in Rome that allow more than six paoli, which is three shillings a day, for the expense of their table; and you may imagine they are still less extravagant here than there. But when they receive a visit from any friend, their houses and persons are set out to the greatest advantage, and appear in all their splendour; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with interest, whenever they have occasion to return the visit. I call visits going from one city of Italy to another; for it is not so among aquaintance of the same place on common occasions. The new pope has retrenched the charges of his own table to a sequin (ten shillings) a meal. The applause which all he says and does meet with, is enough to encourage him really to deserve fame. They say he is an able and honest man: he is reckoned a wit too. The other day, when the senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the first compliments he made him the pope pulled off his cap. His master of the ceremonies, who stood by his side, touched him softly, as to warn him that such a condescension was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule. Upon which he turned to him, and said, "Oh! I cry you mercy, good master: it is true, I am but a novice of a pope; I have not yet so much as learned ill manners." * * *

XXXIX.

TO HIS FATHER.

Florence, Jan. 12, 1741.

We still continue constant at Florence, at present one of the dullest cities in Italy. Though it is the middle of the carnival, there are no public diversions; nor is masquerading permitted as yet. The emperor's obsequies are to be celebrated publicly the 16th of this month; and after that, it is imagined every thing will go on in its usual course. In the mean time, to employ the minds of the populace, the government has thought fit to bring into the city in a solemn manner, and at a great expense, a famous statue of the Virgin, called the Madonna dell'-

Impruneta, from the place of her residence, which is upon a mountain seven miles off. It never has been practised but at times of public calamity; and was done at present to avert the ill effects of a late great inundation, which it was feared might cause some epidemical distemper. It was introduced a fortnight ago in procession, attended by the council of regency, the senate, the nobility, and all the religious orders, on foot and bare-headed, and so carried to the great church, where it was frequented by an infinite concourse of people from all the country round. Among the rest, I paid my devotions almost every day, and saw numbers of people possessed with the devil, who were brought to be exorcised. It was indeed in the evening, and the church-doors were always shut before the ceremonies were finished, so that I could not be eye-witness of the event; but that they were all cured is certain, for one never heard any more of them the next morning. I am to-night just returned from seeing our lady make her exit with the same solemnities she entered. The show had a finer effect than before; for it was dark, and every body (even those of the mob that could afford it) bore a white wax flambeau. I believe there were at least five thousand of them, and the march was near three hours in passing before the window. The subject of all this devotion is supposed to be a large tile with a rude figure in bas-relief upon it. I say supposed, because since the time it was found (for it was found in the earth in ploughing) only two people have seen it; the one was, by good luck, a saint; the other was struck blind for his presumption. Ever since she has been covered with seven veils; nevertheless, those who approach her tabernacle cast their eyes down, for fear they should spy her through all her veils. Such is the history, as I had from the lady of the house where I stood to see her pass; with many other circumstances: all of which she firmly believes, and ten thousand besides.

We shall go to Venice in about six weeks, or sooner. A number of German troops are upon their march into this state, in case the king of Naples thinks proper to attack it. It is certain that he asked the pope's leave for his troops to pass through his country. The Tuscans in general are much discontented, and foolish enough to wish for a Spanish government, or any rather than this. * * *

XL.

TO MR. WEST.

Florence, April 21, 1741.

I KNOW not what degree of satisfaction it will give you to be told that we shall set out from hence the 24th of this month, and not stop above a fortnight at any place in our way. This I feel, that you are the principal pleasure I have to hope for in my own country. Try at least to make me imagine myself not indifferent to you; for I must own I have the vanity of desiring to be esteemed by somebody, and would choose that somebody should be one whom I esteem as much as I do you. As I am recommending myself to your love, methinks I ought to send you my picture (for I am no more what I was, some circumstances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you;) you must add then, to your former idea, two years of age, a reasonable quantity of dulness, a great deal of silence, and something that rather resembles, than is, thinking; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have swum before my eyes for some time, a want of love for general society, indeed, an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults or weaknesses, a love of truth, and detestation of every thing else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and some spirits. These are all the alterations I know of, you perhaps may find more. Think not that I have been obliged for this reformation of manners to reason or reflection, but to a severer school-mistress, experience. One has little merit in learning her lessons, for one cannot well help it; but they are more useful than others, and imprint themselves in the very heart. I find I have been haranguing in the style of the Son of Sirach, so shall finish here, and tell you that our route is settled as follows: first to Bologna for a few days, to hear the Viscontina sing; next to Reggio, where is a fair. Now, you must know, a fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread or rides upon hobby-horses; here are no musical clocks, nor tall Leicestershire women; one has nothing but masquing, gaming, and singing. If you love operas, there will be the most splendid in Italy, four tip-top voices, a new theatre, the duke and duchess in all their pomps and vanities. Does not this sound magnificent? Yet is the city of Reggio but one step above Old Brentford. Well; next, to Venice by the 11th of May, there to see the old Doge wed the Adriatic whore. Then to Verona, so to Milan, so to Marseilles, so to Lyons, so to Paris, so to West, &c. in sæcula sæculorum Amen.

Eleven months, at different times, have I passed at Florence; and yet (God help me) know not either people or language. Yet the place and the charming prospects demand a poetical farewell, and here it is.

* * Oh Fæsulæ amœna
Frigoribus juga, nec nimium spirantibus auris,
Alma quibus Tusci Pallas Deus Apennini
Esse dedit, glaucaque sua canescere silva!
Non ego vos posthac Arni de valle videbo
Porticibus circum, et candenti cincta corona
Villarum longe nitido consurgere dorso,
Antiquamve ædem, et veteres præferre cupressus
Mirabor, tectisque super pendentia tecta.

I will send you, too, a pretty little sonnet of a Signor Abbate Buondelmonte, with my imitation of it.

Spesso Amor sotto la forma
D'amistà ride, e s'asconde:
Poi si mischia, e si confonde
Con lo sdegno, e col rancor.
In Pietade ei si trasforma;
Par trastullo, e par dispetto:
Mà nel suo diverso aspetto:
Sempr'egli, e l'istesso Amor.

Lusit amicitiæ interdum velatus amictu,
Et bene composita veste fefellit Amor.
Mox iræ assumsit cultus, faciemque minantem,
Inque odium versus, versus et in lacrymas:
Ludentem fuge, nec lacrymanti, aut crede furenti;
Idem est dissimili semper in ore Deus.

Here comes a letter from you.—I must defer giving my opinion of *Pausanias till I can see the whole, and only have said what I did in obedience to your commands. I have spoken with such freedom on this head, that it seems but just you should have your revenge; and therefore I send you the beginning not of an epic poem, but of † a metaphysic one. Poems and metaphysics (say you, with your spectacles on) are inconsistent things. A metaphysical poem is a contradiction in terms. It is true, but I will go on. It is Latin too to increase the absurdity. It will, I suppose, put you in mind of the

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* Some part of a tragedy under that title, which Mr. West had begun.

† The beginning of the first book of a didactic poem, "De Principiis Cogitandi."—*See Poems.*

man who wrote a treatise of canon law in hexameters. Pray help me to the description of a mixed mode, and a little episode about space.

Mr. Walpole and Mr. Gray set out from Florence at the time specified in the foregoing letter. When Mr. Gray left Venice, which he did the middle of July following, he returned home through Padua, Verona, Milan, Turin, and Lyons; from all which places he writ either to his father or mother with great punctuality: but merely to inform them of his health and safety; about which (as might be expected) they were now very anxious, as he travelled with only a "Laquais de Voyage." These letters do not even mention that he went out of his way to make a second visit to the Grande Chartreuse, and there wrote in the Album of the Fathers the Alcaic Ode;

Oh Tu, severi Religio loci, &c.—*See Poems.*

He was at Turin the 15th of August, and began to cross the Alps the next day. On the 25th he reached Lyons; therefore it must have been between these two dates that he made this visit.

XLI.

FROM MR. WEST.

I WRITE to make you write, for I have not much to tell you. I have recovered no spirits as yet,* but, as I am not displeased with my company, I sit purring by the fire-side in my arm-chair with no small satisfaction. I read too sometimes, and have begun Tacitus, but have not yet read enough to judge of him; only his Pannonian sedition in the first book of his annals, which is just as far as I have got, seemed to me a little tedious. I have no more to say, but to desire you will write letters of a handsome length, and always answer me within a reasonable space of time, which I leave to your discretion.

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* The distresses of Mr. West's mind had already too far affected a body, from the first weak and delicate. His health declined daily, and, therefore, he left town in March, 1742, and, for the benefit of the air, went to David Mitchell's, Esq. at Popes, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire; at whose house he died the 1st of June following.

Popes, March 28, 1742.

P. S. The new Dunciad! qu'en pensez vous?

XLII.

TO MR. WEST.*

I TRUST to the country, and that easy indolence you say you enjoy there, to restore you your health and spirits; and doubt not but, when the sun grows warm enough to tempt you from your fire-side, you will (like all other things) be the better for his influence. He is my old friend, and an excellent nurse, I assure you. Had it not been for him, life had been often to me intolerable. Pray do not imagine that

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* Mr. Gray came to town about the 1st of September, 1741. His father died the 6th of November following, at the age of sixty-five. The latter end of the subsequent year he went to Cambridge to take his bachelor's degree in civil law.

Tacitus, af all authors in the world, can be tedious. An annalist, you know, is by no means master of his subject; and I think one may venture to say, that if those Pannonian affairs are tedious in his hands, in another's they would have been insupportable. However, fear not, they will soon be over, and he will make ample amends. A man, who could join the *brilliant* of wit and concise sententiousness peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection and good sense of the best moderns, cannot choose but have something to strike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his detestation of tyranny, and the high spirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out as it were, whether he would or no. I remenber a sentence in his Agricola that (concise as it is) I always admired for saying much in a little compass. He speaks of Domitian, who upon seeing the last will of that general, where he had made him coheir with his wife and daughter, "Satis constabat lætatum eum, velut honore, judicioque: tam cæca et corrupta mens assiduis adulationibus erat, ut nesciret a bono patre non scribi hæredem, nisi malum principem."

As to the Dunciad, it is greatly admired: the genii of Operas and Schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the Virtuosos and Florists, and the yawn of Dulness in the end, are as fine as any thing he has written. The Metaphysician's part is to me the worst; and here and there a few ill expressed lines, and some hardly intelligible.

I take the liberty of sending you a long speech of Agrippina;* much too long, but I could be glad you would retrench it. Aceronia, you may remember, had been giving quiet counsels. I fancy, if it ever be finished, it will be in the nature of Nat. Lee's bedlam tragedy, which had twenty-five acts and some odd scenes.

XLIII.

FROM MR. WEST.

Popes. April 4, 1742.

I OWN in general I think Agrippina's speech too long; but how to retrench it, I know not: but I have something else to say, and that is in relation to the style which appears to me too antiquated. Racine was of another opinion: he no where gives you the phrases of Ronsard: his language is the language of the times, and that of the purest sort; so that his French is reckoned a standard. I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage: but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakspeare. One may imitate (if one can) Shakspeare's manner, his surprising strokes of true nature, his expressive force in painting characters, and all his other beauties; preserving at the same time our own language. Were Shakspeare alive now, he would write in a different style from what he did. These are my sentiments upon these matters: perhaps I am wrong, for I am neither a Tarpa, nor am I quite an Aristarchus. You see I write freely both of you and Shakspeare; but it is as good as writing not freely, where you know it is acceptable.

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* See Poems.

I have been tormented within this week with a most violent cough; for when once it sets up its note, it will go on, cough after cough, shaking and tearing me for half an hour together; and then it leaves me in a great sweat, as much fatigued as if I had been labouring at the plough. All this description of my cough in prose, is only to introduce another description of it in verse, perhaps not worth your perusal; but it is very short, and besides has this remarkable in it, that it was the production of four o'clock in the morning, while I lay in my bed tossing and coughing, and all unable to sleep.

Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis,
Qua durare datur, traxitque sub ilia vires:
Dura etenim versans imo sub pectore regna,
Perpetuo exercet teneras luctamine costas,
Oraque distorquet, vocemque immutat anhelam;
Nec cessare locus: sed sævo concita motu,
Molle domat latus, et corpus labor omne fatigat:
Unde molesta dies, noctemque insomnia turbant.
Nec Tua, si mecum Comes hic jucundus adesses,
Verba juvare queant, aut hunc lenire dolorem
Sufficiant tua vox dulcis, nec vultus amatus.

Do not mistake me, I do not condemn Tacitus: I was then inclined to find him tedious: the German sedition sufficiently made up for it; and the speech of Germanicus, by which he reclaims his soldiers, is quite masterly. Your New Dunciad I have no conception of. I shall be too late for our dinner if I write any more.

Yours.

XLIII.

TO DR. WHARTON.*

Cambridge, Dec. 27, 1742.

I OUGHT to have returned you my thanks a long time ago, for the pleasure, I should say prodigy, of your letter; for such a thing has not happened above twice within this last age to mortal man, and no one here can conceive what it may portend. You have heard, I suppose, how I have been employed a part of the time; how, by my own indefatigable application for these ten years past, and by the care and vigilance of that worthy magistrate the man in blue,† (who, I assure you, has not spared his labour, nor could have done more for his own son) I am got half way to the top of jurisprudence,‡ and bid as fair as another body to open a case of impotency with all decency and circumspection. You see my ambition. I do not doubt but some thirty years hence I shall convince the world and you that I am a very pretty young fellow; and may come to shine in a profession. perhaps the noblest of all, except man-midwifery. As for you, if your distemper and you can but agree about going to London, I may reasonably expect in a much shorter time to see you in your three-cornered villa, doing the honours of a well-furnished table with as much dignity, as rich a mien, and as capacious a belly, as Dr. Mead. Methinks I see Dr. * *, at the lower end of it, lost in admiration of your goodly person and parts, cramming down his envy (for it will rise) with the wing of a pheasant, and drowning it in neat Burgundy. But not to tempt your asthma too much with such a prospect, I should think you might be almost as happy and as great as this even in the country. But you know best, and I should be sorry to say any thing that might stop you in the career of glory, far be it from me to hamper the wheels of your gilded chariot. Go on, Sir Thomas; and when you die, (for even physicians must die) may the faculty in Warwick-lane erect your statue in the very niche of Sir John Cutler's.

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* Of Old-Park, near Durham. With this gentleman Mr. Gray contracted an acquaintance very early: and though they were not educated at Eton, yet afterwards at Cambridge, when the doctor was fellow of Pembroke-Hall, they became intimate friends, and continued so to the time of Mr. Gray's death.

† A servant of the vice-chancellor's for the time being, usually known by the name of Blue Coat, whose business it is to attend acts for degrees, &c.

‡ *i. e.* Bachelor of civil law.

I was going to tell you how sorry I am for your illness, but I hope it is too late now: I can only say that I really was very sorry. May you live a hundred Christmasses, and eat as many collars of brawn stuck with rosemary. Adieu, &c.

XLV.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Peterhouse, April 26, 1744.

You write so feelingly to Mr. Brown, and represent your abandoned condition in terms so touching, that what gratitude could not effect in several months, compassion has brought about in a few days; and broke that strong attachment, or rather allegiance, which I and all here owe to our sovereign lady and mistress, the president of presidents and head of heads, (If I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton) the power of Laziness. You must know she had been pleased to appoint me (in preference to so many old servants of hers who had spent their whole lives in qualifying themselves for the office) grand picker of straws and push-pin player to her supinity, (for that is her title.) The first is much in the nature of lord president of the council; and the other like the groom-porter, only without the profit; but as they are both things of very great honour in this country, I consider with myself the load of envy attending such great charges; and besides (between you and me) I found myself unable to support the fatigue of keeping up the appearance that persons of such dignity must do; so I thought proper to decline it, and excused myself as well as I could. However, as you see such an affair must take up a good deal of time, and it has always been the policy of this court to proceed slowly, like the Imperial and that of Spain, in the dispatch of business you will on this account the easier forgive me, if I have not answered your letter before.

You desire to know, it seems, what character the poem of your young friend bears here.* I wonder that you ask the opinion of a nation, where those, who pretend to judge, do not judge at all; and the rest (the wiser part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them; that is, Dick's and the Rainbow Coffee-houses. Your readier way would be to ask the ladies that keep the bars in those two theatres of criticism. However, to show you that I am a judge, as well as my countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it (but no matter; no more have they,) that it seems to me above the middling; and now and then, for a little while, rises even to the best, particularly in description. It is often obscure, and even unintelligible; and too much infected with the Hutchinson jargon. In short, its great fault is, that it was published at least nine years too early. And so methinks in a few words, "à la mode du Temple," I have very pertly dispatched what may perhaps for several years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myself.

You are much in the right to have a taste for Socrates he was a divine man. I must tell you by way of news of the place, that the other day a certain new professor made an apology for him an hour long in the schools; and all the world brought in Socrates guilty, except the people of his own college.

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* Pleasures of the Imagination :—From the posthumous publication of Dr. Akenside's Poems, it should seem that the author had very much the same opinion afterwards of his own work, which Mr Gray here expresses; since he undertook a reform of it, which must have given him, had he concluded it, as much trouble as if he had written it entirely new.

The muse is gone, and left me in far worse company; if she returns, you will hear of her. As to her child* (since your are so good as to inquire after it) it is but a puling chit yet, not a bit grown to speak of; I believe, poor thing it has got the worms, that will carry it off at last. Mr. Trollope and I are in a course of tar-water; he for his present, and I for my future distempers. If you think it will kill me, send away a man and horse directly; for I drink like a fish.

XLV.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Feb. 3, 1746.

You are so good to inquire after my usual time of coming to town: it is at a season when even you, the perpetual friend of London, will, I fear, hardly be in it—the middle of June: and I commonly return hither in September; a month when I may more probably find you at home.

Our defeat to be sure is a rueful affair for the honour of the troops; but the duke is gone it seems with the rapidity of a cannon-bullet to undefeat us again. The common people in town at least know how to be afraid; but we are such *uncommon* people here as to have no more sense of danger, than if the battle had been fought when and where the battle of Cannæ was. The perception of these calamities and of their consequences, that we are supposed to get from books, is so faintly impressed, that we talk of war, famine, and pestilence, with no more apprehension than of a broken head, or of a coach overturned between York and Edinburgh I heard three people, sensible middlle aged men (when the Scotch were said to be at Stanford, and actually were at Derby,) talking of hiring a chaise to go to Caxton (a place in the high road) to see the Pretender and the highlanders as they passed.

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* His poem "De Principiis Cogitandi."

I can say no more for Mr. Pope (for what you keep in reserve may be worse than all the rest.) It is natural to wish the finest writer, one of them, we ever had, should be an honest man. It is for the interest even of that virtue, whose friend he professed himself, and whose beauties he sung, that he should not be found a dirty animal. But, however, this is Mr. Warburton's business, not mine, who may scribble his pen to the stumps and all in vain, if these facts are so. It is not from what he told me abou thimself that I thought well of him, but from a humanity and goodness of heart, ay, and greatness of mind, that runs through his private correspondence, not less apparent than are a thousand little vanities and weaknesses mixed with those good qualities; for nobody ever took him for a philosopher.

If you know any thing of Mr. Mann's state of health and happiness, or the motions of Mr Chute homewards, it will be a particular favour to inform me of them, as I have not heard this half-year from them.

XLVI.

TO DR. WHARTON.

Cambridge, December, 11, 1746.

I WOULD make you an excuse (as indeed I ought,) if they were a sort of thing I ever gave any credit to myself in these cases; but I know they are never true. Nothing so silly as indolence when it hopes to disguise itself; every one knows it by its saunter, as they do his majesty (God bless him) at a masquerade, by the firmness of his tread and the elevation of his chin. However, somewhat I had to say that has a little shadow of reason in it. I have been in town (I suppose you know) flaunting about at all kind of public places with two friends lately returned from abroad. The world itself has some attractions in it to a solitary of six years' standing: and agreeable well-meaning people of sense (thank heaven there are so few of them) are my peculiar magnet. It is no wonder then if I felt some reluctance at parting with them so soon; or if my spirits, when I returned back to my cell, should sink for a time, not indeed to storm and tempest, but a good deal below changeable. Besides, Seneca says (and my pitch of philosophy does not pretend to be much above Seneca,) "Nunquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid ex his, quæ fugavi, redit." And it will happen to such as us, mere imps of science. Well it may, when wisdom herself is forced often

In sweet retired solitude
To plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.

It is a foolish thing that without money one cannot either live as one pleases, or where and with whom one pleases. Swift somewhere says, that money is liberty; and I fear money is friendship too and society, and almost every external blessing. It is a great, though an ill-natured, comfort, to see most of those who have it in plenty, without pleasure, without liberty, and without friends.

I am not altogether of your opinion as to your historical consolation in time of trouble: a calm melancholy it may produce, a stiller sort of despair (and that only in some circumstances, and on some constitutions;) but I doubt no real comfort or content can ever arise in the human mind, but from hope.

I take it very ill you should have been in the twentieth year of the war,* and yet say nothing of the retreat before Syracuse: is it, or is it not, the finest thing you ever read in your life? And how does Xenophon or Plutarch agree with you? For my part I read Aristotle, his poetics, politics, and morals; though I do not well know which is which.

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* Thucydides, l, vii.

In the first place, he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book: it tastes for all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention; so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties; and, what is worse, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly from the transcribblers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you are to expect from him.

XLVII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

January, 1747.

It is doubtless an encouragement to continue writing to you, when you tell me you answer me with pleasure: I have another reason which would make me very copious, had I any thing to say: it is, that I write to you with equal pleasure, though not with equal spirits, nor with like plenty of materials: please to subtract then so much for spirit, and so much for matter; and you will find me, I hope, neither so slow, nor so short, as I might otherwise seem. Besides, I had a mind to send you the remainder of Agrippina, that was lost in a wilderness of papers. Certainly you do her too much honour: she seemed to me to talk like an *Oldboy*, all in figures and mere poetry, instead of nature and the language of real passion. Do you remember *Approchez-vous*,* *Neron*.—Who would not rather have thought of that half line than all Mr. Rowe's flowers of eloquence? However, you will find the remainder here at the end in an outrageous long speech: it was begun about four years ago (it is a misfortune you know my age, else I might have added, when I was very young.) Poor West put a stop to that tragic torrent he saw breaking in upon him:—have a care, I warn you, not to set open the flood-gate again, lest it drown you and me and the bishop and all.

I am very sorry to hear you treat philosophy and her followers like a parcel of monks and hermits, and think myself obliged to vindicate a profession I honour, bien que je n'en tienne pas boutique (as Madame Sevigné says.) The first man that ever bore the name, if you remember, used to say, that life was like the Olympic games (the greatest public assembly of his age and country,) where some came to show their strength and agility of body, as the champions; others, as the musicians, orators, poets, and historians, to show their excellence in those arts; the traders, to get money; and the better sort, to enjoy the spectacle, and judge of all these. They did not then run away from society for fear of its temptations: they passed their days in the midst of it: conversation was their business: they cultivated the arts of persuasion, on purpose to show men it was their interest, as well as their duty, not to be foolish, and false, and unjust; and that too in many instances with success: which is not very strange; for they showed by their life that their lessons were not impracticable; and that pleasures were no temptations, but to such as wanted a clear perception of the pains annexed to them.* But I have done speaking à la Grecque. Mr. Ratcliffe† made a shift to behave very rationally without their instructions, at a season which they took a great deal of pains to fortify themselves and others against: one would not desire to lose one's head with a better grace. I am particularly satisfied with the humanity of that last embrace to all the people about him. Sure it must be somewhat embarrassing to die before so much good company!

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* Agrippina, in Racine's tragedy of Britannicus. B.

You need not fear but posterity will be ever glad to know the absurdity of their ancestors; the foolish will be glad to know they were as foolish as they, and the wise will be glad to find themselves wiser.

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* Never perhaps was a more admirable picture drawn of *true* philosophy and its real and important services: services not confined to the speculative opinions of the studious, but adapted to the common purposes of life, and promoting the general happiness of mankind; not upon the chimerical basis of a system but on the immutable foundations of truth and virtue. B.

† Brother to the earl of Derwentwater. He was executed at Tyburn, December, 1746, for having been concerned in the rebellion in Scotland. B.

You will please all the world then; and if you recount miracles you will be believed so much the sooner. We are pleased when we wonder; and we believe because we are pleased. Folly and wisdom, and wonder and pleasure, join with me in desiring you would continue to entertain them: refuse us, if you can. Adieu, dear Sir!

XLVIII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, March 1, 1747.

As one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima, (Selima was it, or Fatima?) or rather I knew them botb together; for I cannot justly say which was which.—Then as to your handsome cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the surviver: Oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry;

> "Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque doloris."

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives time to rejoice with you on your new honours.* This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we shall hear you are a free-mason, or a gormogon at least.—Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your cat, feuë mademoiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows:† * * *—There's a poem for you; it is rather too long for an epitaph.

XLIX.

TO DR. WHARTON

Stoke, June 5, 1748.

Your friendship has interested itself in my affairs so naturally, that I cannot help troubling you a little with a detail of them.* * * * * * * * * * And now, my dear Wharton, why must I tell you a thing so contrary to my own wishes and yours? I believe it is impossible for me to see you in the north, or to enjoy any of those agreeable hours I had flattered myself with. This business will oblige me to be in town several times during the summer, particularly in August, when half the money is to be paid; besides the good people here would think me the most careless and ruinous of mortals, if I should take such a journey at this time. The only satisfaction I can pretend to, is that of hearing from you, and particularly at this time when I was bid to expect the good news of an increase of your family. Your opinion of Diodorus is doubtless right; but there are things in him very curious, got out of better authorities now lost. Do you remember the Egyptian history, and particularly the account of the gold mines? My own readings have been cruelly interrupted: what I have been highly pleased with, is the new comedy from Paris by Gresset, called le Mechant; if you have it not, buy his works all together in two little volumes: they are collected by the Dutch booksellers, and consequently contain some trash; but then there are the Ververt, the epistle to P. Bougeant, the Chartreuse, that to his sister, an ode on his country, and another on mediocrity, and the Sidnei, another comedy, all which have great beauties. There is also a poem lately published by Thomson, called the Castle of Indolence, with some good stanzas in it. Mr. Mason is my acquaintance; I liked that ode much, but have found no one else that did. He has much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature; but then he is really in simplicity a child, and loves every body he meets with: he reads little or nothing; writes abundance, and that with a design to make his fortune by it. My best compliments to Mrs. Wharton and your family: does that name include any body I am not yet acquainted with?

---

* Mr. Walpole was about this time elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

† The reader need hardly be told, that the 4th ode in the collection of his poems was inserted in the place of these asterisks. This letter (as some other slight ones have been) is printed chiefly to mark the date of one of his compositions.

---

* The paragraph here omitted contained an account of Mr. Gray's loss of a house by fire in Cornhill, and the expense he should be at in rebuilding it. Though it was insured, he could at this time ill bear to lay out the additional sum necessary for the purpose.

L.

TO DR. WHARTON,

Cambridge, August 8, 1749.

I PROMISED Dr. Keene long since to give you an account of our magnificence here;* but the newspapers and he himself in person, have got the start of my indolence, so that by this time you are well acquainted with all the events that adorned that week of wonders. Thus much I may venture to tell you, because it is probable nobody else has done it, that our friend * *'s zeal and eloquence surpassed all power of description. Vesuvio in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance, nor (since I am at my mountains) Pelion, with all its pine-trees in a storm of wind, more impetuous than his action; and yet the senate-house still stands, and (I thank God) we are all safe and well at your service. I was ready to sink for him, and scarce dared to look about me, when I was sure it was all over; but soon found I might have spared my confusion; all people joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right; and I dare swear not three people here but think him a model of oratory; for all the duke's little court came with a resolution to be pleased; and when the tone was once given, the university, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, struck into it with an admirable harmony: for the rest of the performances, they were just what they usually are. Every one, while it lasted, was very gay and very busy in the morning, and very owlish and very tipsy at night: I make no exceptions from the chancellor to blue-coat. Mason's ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance; and, for my own part, I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an occasion. Pray let me know your sentiments; for doubtless you have seen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more; he is very ingenious, with great good-nature and simplicity; a little vain, but in so harmless and so comical a way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but withal so ignorant in the world and its ways that this does not hurt him in one's opinion; so sincere and so undisguised, that no mind with a spark of generosity, would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all. After all, I like him so well, I could wish you knew him.

---

* The Duke of Newcastle's Installation as Chancellor of the University.

LI.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.

THE unhappy news I have just received from you equally surprises and afflicts me.* I have lost a person I loved very much, and have been used to from my infancy; but am much more concerned for your loss, the circumstances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you must be too sensible of them yourself; and will, I fear, more and more need a consolation that no one can give, except He who has preserved her to you so many years, and, at last, when it was his pleasure, has taken her from us to himself; and perhaps, if we reflect npon what she felt in this life, we may look upon this as an instance of his goodness both to her, and to those that loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless; she might have long wished to end her misery without being able to attain it; or perhaps even lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe; a sad spectacle to such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is at last easy and happy: and has no more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will support yourself with that resignation we owe to Him, who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the same reason. I would have come to you directly, but you do not say whether you desire I should or not; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

---

* The death of his aunt Mrs. Mary Antrobus, who died the 5th of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke churchyard, near the chancel door, in which also his mother and himself (according to the direction in his will) were afterwards buried.

LII.

TO MR. WALPOLE.

Stoke, June 12, 1750.

As I live in a place, where even the ordinary tattle of the town arrives not till it is stale, and which produces no events of its own, you will not desire any excuse from me for writing so seldom, especially as of all people living I know you are the least a friend to letters spun out of one's own brains, with all the toil and constraint that accompanies sentimental productions. I have been here at Stoke a few days (where I shall continue good part of the summer;) and having put an end to a thing, whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it you.*

---

* This was the Elegy in the churchyard.—B.

You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a *thing with an end to it*; a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want, but which this epistle I am determined shall not want, when it tells you that I am ever

Yours.

Not that I have done yet; but who could avoid the temptation of finishing so roundly and so cleverly in the manner of good queen Anne's days? Now I have talked of writings; I have seen a book, which is by this time in the press, against Middleton (though without naming him,) by Asheton. As far as I can judge from a very hasty reading, there are things in it new and ingenious, but rather too prolix, and the style here and there savouring too strongly of sermon. I imagine it will do him credit. So much for other people, now to *self* again. You are desired to tell me your opinion, if you can take the pains, of these lines. I am once more.

Ever yours.

POEMS

OF

THOMAS GRAY.

ODES.

ODE I.

ON THE SPRING.

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year,
The attic warbler pours her throat
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring,
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade.*

---

* ————————————a bank
O'er-canopied with luscious woodbine.
Shaksp. Mid. Dream.

Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little, are the proud,
How indigent the great.

Still is the toiling hand of Care,
The panting herds repose,
Yet hark! how through the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honeyed spring,
And float amid the liquid noon;*
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gayly-gilded trim,
Quick-glancing to the sun.†

To contemplation's sober eye,‡
Such is the race of man,
And they that creep and they that fly
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter through life's little day,

---

* Nare per æstatem liquidam. *Virg. Georg. lib.* 4.

† ———sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold.
Milton's Paradise Lost, b. 7.

‡ While insects from the threshold preach, &c.
Mr. Green in the Grotto. Dodsley's Miscellanies, vol v. *p.* 161.

In fortune's varying colours drest;
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by Age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear, in accents low,
The sportive kind reply,
Poor Moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display;
On hasty wings thy youth is flown,
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolic while 'tis May.

ODE II.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT,

Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had died
The azure flowers that blow,
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw, and purred applause.

Still had she gazed, but, 'midst the tide,
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue,
Through richest purple, to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize:
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent,
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between:
(Malignant Fate sat by and smiled,)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled;
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood,
She mewed to every watery god

Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred,
Nor cruel Tom or Susan heard:
A fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties! undeceived,
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold:
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes,
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
Nor all that glistens gold.

ODE III.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ye distant Spires! ye antique Towers!
That crown the watery glade
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's* holy shade;
And ye that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead, survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way;

---

* King Henry VI. founder of the College.

Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
Ah fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood strayed;
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent* of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, father Thames! for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race,
Disporting on thy margent green,
The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some, on earnest business bent,
Their murmuring labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint,
To sweeten liberty;

---

* And bees their honey redolent of spring.
Dryden's Fable on the Pythag. System.

Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
  And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
  And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs, by fancy fed,
  Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
  The sunshine of the breast;
Their buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
  And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
  That fly th'approach of morn.

Alas! regardless of their doom,
  The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
  Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The ministers of human fate,
  And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah! show them where in ambush stand,
To seize their prey, the murderous band!
  Ah! tell them they are men.

These shall the fury passions tear,
The vultures of the mind;
Disdainful anger, pallid fear,
And shame that skulks behind,
Or pining love shall waste their youth,
Or jealousy, with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart;
And envy wan, and faded care,
Grim-visaged, comfortless despair,
And sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter scorn a sacrifice.
And grinning infamy,
The stings of falsehood those shall try,
And hard unkindness' altered eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen remorse, with blood defiled,
And moody madness* laughing wild
Amid severest wo.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of death,
More hideous than their queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every lab'ring sinew strains,

---

* And Madness laughing in his ireful mood.
Dryden's Fable of Palamon and Arcite.

Those in the deeper vitals rage;
Lo! poverty to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming age.

To each his sufferings; all are men
Condemned alike to groan,
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise.

ODE IV.

TO ADVERSITY.

Daughter of Jove, relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
  Virtue, his darling child, designed,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
  And bade to form her infant mind;
Stern rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt at others' wo.

Scared at thy frown terrific fly
  Self-pleasing folly's idle brood,
Wild laughter, noise and thoughtless joy,
  And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse; and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom, in sable garb arrayed,
  Immersed in rapt'rous thought profound,
And melancholy, silent maid,
  With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend;
Warm charity, the general friend,
With justice, to herself severe,
And pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,
  Dread goddess! lay thy chastening hand,
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
  Nor circled with the vengeful band;

(As by the impious thou art seen,)
With thundering voice and threatening mien,
With screaming horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell disease, and ghastly poverty.

Thy form benign, O Goddess! wear,
  Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there,
  To soften, not to wound, my heart:
The generous spark extinct revive;
Teach me to love and to forgive;
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a man.

ODE V.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.—PINDARIC.

Advertisement.

When the Author first published this and the following Ode, he was advised, even by his friends, to subjoin some few explanatory notes, but had too much respect for the understanding of his readers to take that liberty.

I. 1

Awake, Æolian lyre! awake,*
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings;
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take;

---

* Awake, my glory! awake, lute and harp.
David's Psalms.
Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.

The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales and Ceres' golden reign;
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

I. 2.

Oh sovereign* of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen cares
And frantic passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the lord of war
Has curbed the fury of his car,
And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command:
Perching on the sceptred hand†
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing;
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak and lightning of his eye.

The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are here united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all it touches, are here described, as well in its quiet majestic progress, enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with all the pomp of diction, and luxuriant harmony of numbers, as in its more rapid and irresistible course when swollen and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

* Power of harmony to calm the turbulent passions of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.

† This is a weak imitation of some beautiful lines in the same ode.

I. 3.

Thee* the voice, the dance obey,
Tempered to thy warbled lay:
O'er Idalia's velvet green
The rosy-crowned loves are seen,
On Cytherea's day,
With antic sports and blue-eyed pleasures
Frisking light in frolic measures:
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet;
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow-melting strains their queen's approach declare;
Where'er she turns the graces homage pay:
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way;
O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move
The bloom of young desire and purple light of love.

II. 1.

Man's feeble race what ills await!†
Labour and penury, the racks of pain,
Disease, and sorrow's weeping train,
And death, sad refuge from the storms of fate!

---

* Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

† To compensate the real or imaginary ills of life, the muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day by its cheerful presence to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night.

The fond complaint, my song! disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly muse?
Night and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky,
Till down the eastern cliffs afar*
Hyperion's march they spy and glittering shafts of [war.

II. 2.

In climes† beyond the solar road,‡
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode:
And oft beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers, wildly sweet,
Their feather-cinctured chiefs and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous shame,
The unconquerable mind and freedom's holy flame.

---

* Or seen the morning's well-appointed star,
Come marching up the eastern hills afar. *Cowley.*

† Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations; its connexion with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it. (See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welsh Fragments, the Lapland and American Songs, &c.)

‡ Extra anni solisque vias. *Virgil.*
Tutta lontana dal camin del sole. *Petrarch. Canz. 2.*

II. 3.

Woods that wave o'er Delphi's steep,*
Isles that crown the Ægean deep,
Fields that cool Illissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering lab'rinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute but to the voice of anguish?
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around,
Every shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound,
Till the sad nine, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains:
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant power
And coward vice, that revels in her chains,
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh, Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer gale,
In thy green lap was nature's darling† laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed
To him the mighty mother did unveil

* Progress of poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there: Spencer imitated the Italian writers, Milton improved on them: but this school expired soon after the restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

† Shakspeare.

Her awful face; the dauntless child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year,
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

III. 2.

Nor second he[*] that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of ecstacy,
The secrets of th' abyss to spy,
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:[†]
The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,[‡]
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw, but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night
Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,[§]
With necks in thunder clothed[||] and long resounding pace.

---

[*] Milton.

[†] ——flammantia mœnia mundi. *Lucretius.*

[‡] For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone.——This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord.
Ezekiel i. 20, 26, 28.

[§] Meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes.

[||] Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? *Job.*

III. 3.

Hark! his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe and words that burn;[*]
But ah! 'tis heard no more[†]—
Oh, lyre divine! what daring spirit
Wakes thee now? though he inherit
Nor the pride nor ample pinion
That the Theban eagle bear,[‡]
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air,
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun;
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the good how far—but far above the great.

---

[*] Words that weep and tears that speak. *Cowley.*

[†] We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's day; for Cowley, who had his merit, yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony, for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason, indeed, of late days, has touched the true chords, and, with a masterly hand, in some of his chorusses—above all, in the last of Caractacus;

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread? &c.

[‡] Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below, while it pursues its flight regardless of their noise.

ODE VI.

THE BARD.—PINDARIC.

Advertisement.

The following Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward I. when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

I. 1.

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Though fanned by conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.[*]
Helm nor hauberk's[†] twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant! shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears;
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride[‡]
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side[§]
He wound with toilsome march his long array.

---

[*] Mocking the air with colours idly spread.
Shaksp. King John.

[†] The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

[‡] The crested adder's pride. *Dryden's Indian Queen.*

[§] Snowdon was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract which the Welsh themselves call Craigian-eryri:

Stout Glo'ster[*] stood aghast in speechless trance:
To arms cried Mortimer,[†] and couched his quivering
lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of wo,
With haggard eyes the poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair[‡]
Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air,[§])
And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark how each giant oak and desert cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh king! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;

---

it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway. R. Hygdèn, speaking of the castle of Conway, built by king Edward I. says, *Ardortum amnis Conway ad clivum montis Erery*; and Matthew of Westminster, (*ad un.* 1283) *Apud Aberconway ad pedes montis Snowdoniæ fecit erigi castrum forte.*

[*] Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to king Edward.

[†] Edmund de Mortimer, lord of Wigmore. They both were lord Marchers, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the king in this expedition.

[‡] The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. There are two of these paintings, both believed original; one at Florence, the other at Paris.

[§] Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind.
Milton's Paradise Lost.

Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To highborn Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main;
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains! ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topped head.
On dreary Arvon's* shore they lie,
Smeared with gore and ghastly pale;
Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail,
The famished eagle† screams and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear ‡ as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries——
No more I weep. They do not sleep:

---

* The shores of Caernarvonshire, opposite to the isle of Anglesey.

† Camden and others observe, that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named, by the Welsh, Craigianeryri, or the crags of the Eagles. At this day (I am told) the highest point of Snowdon is called The Eagle's Nest. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scotts, and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, &c. can testify: it even has built its nest in the Peak of Derbyshire. [See *Willoughby's Ornithol.* published by Ray.]

‡ As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart. *Shaksp. Julius Cæsar.*

On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit; they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land;
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave* with bloody hands the tissue of thy line."

II. 1.

'Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race:
Give ample room and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year and mark the night
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death through Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king![†]
She-wolf of France,[‡] with unrelenting fangs
That tearest the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee[§] be born who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of heaven. What terrors round him [wait!
Amazement in his van, with flight combined,
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind.

II. 2.

'Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies![||]
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies!

---

[*] See the Norwegian Ode that follows.

[†] Edward II. cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle.

[‡] Isabel of France, Edward II.'s adulterous queen.

[§] Triumphs of Edward III. in France.

[||] Death of that king, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and mistress.

Is the sable warrior* fled?
Thy son, is gone; he rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noontide beam were born,
Gone to salute the rising morn:
Fair laughs the morn,† and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow and pleasure at the helm,
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That hushed in grim repose expects his evening prey

II 3.

'Fill high the sparkling bowl,‡
The rich repast prepare;
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
Close by the regal chair
Fell thirst and famine scowl
A baleful smile upon the baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,§
Lance to lance and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.

---

* Edward the Black Prince, dead some time before his father.

† Magnificence of Richard II's. reign. See Froissard, and other contemporary writers.

‡ Richard II. (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop, and the confederate lords, in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers) was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon is of much later date.

§ Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster.

Ye towers of Julius![*] London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his consort's[†] faith, his father's[‡] fame,
And spare the meek usurper's[§] holy head.
Above, below, the rose of snow,[||]
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread;
The bristled Boar[¶] in infant gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers'! bending o'er th' accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

'Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof; the thread is spun)
Half of thy heart[**] we consecrate;
(The web is wove; the work is done.')
"Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn

---

[*] Henry VI. George Duke of Clarence, Edward V. Richard Duke of York, &c. believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

[†] Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her husband and her crown.

[‡] Henry V.

[§] Henry VI. very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the crown.

[||] The white and red Roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

[¶] The silver Boar was the badge of Richard III. whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of The Boar.

[**] Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known. The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her are still to be seen at Northampton, Gaddington Waltham, and other places.

Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn.
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height,
Descending slow, their glittering skirts unroll!
Visions of glory! spare my aching sight,
Ye unborn ages crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur* we bewail:
All hail, ye genuine kings;† Britannia's issue, hail!

III. 2.

" Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear,
And gorgeous dames and statesmen old
In bearded majesty appear;
In the midst a form divine,
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line,
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,‡
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.

---

*It was the common belief of the Welsh nation, that king Arthur was still alive in Fairyland, and should return again to reign over Britain.

†Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island, which seemed to be accomplished in the house of Tudor.

‡Speed, relating an audience given by queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, ambassador of Poland, says, "And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartness of her princelie cheekes."

What strings symphonious tremble in the air!
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin![*] hear!
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright rapture calls, and, soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of heaven her many-coloured wings.

III. 3.

"The verse adorn again
Fierce war, and faithful love,[†]
And truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.
In buskined measures move[‡]
Pale grief, and pleasing pain,
With horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice[§] as of the the cherub-choir
Gales from blooming Eden bear,
And distant warblings[||] lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man! thinkest thou yon sanguine [cloud,
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.

---

[*] Taliessen, the chief of the bards, flourished in the 6th century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration, among his countrymen.

[†] Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.
Spencer's Poem to the Fairy Queen.

[‡] Shakspeare.

[§] Milton.

[||] The succession of the poets after Milton's time.

Enough for me: with joy I see
The different doom our fates assign
Be thine despair and sceptred care;
To triumph and to die are mine."
He spoke, and, headlong from the mountain's height,
Deep in the roaring tide, he plunged to endless night.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author once had thoughts (in concert with a friend) of giving a history of English poetry. In the introduction to it he meant to have produced some specimens of the style that reigned in ancient times among the neighbouring nations, or those who had subdued the greater part of this island, and were our progenitors: the following three imitations made a part of them. He afterwards dropped his design; especially after he had heard that it was already in the hands of a person well qualified to do it justice both by his taste and his researches into antiquity.

ODE VII.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

From the Norse tongue.

To be found in the Orcades of Thermodus Torfæus, Hafniæ, 1679, folio; and also in Bartholinus. Vitt er orpit fyrir Valfalli, &c.

PREFACE.

In the 11th century, Sigurd, earl of the Orkney islands, went with a fleet of ships, and a considerable body of troops, into Ireland, to the assistance of Sigtryg with the silken Beard, who was then making war on his father-in-law, Brian, king of Dublin. The earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and Sigtryg was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of Brian, their king, who fell in the action. On Christmas-day (the day of the battle) a native of Caithness, in Scotland, saw, at a distance, a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till, looking through an opening in the rock, he saw twelve gigantic figures, resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful song, which, when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and each taking her portion, galloped six to the north, and as many to the south.

Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of hell prepare,)
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower*
Hurtles† in the darkened air.

Glittering lances are the loom
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's wo and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights that play below
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along:
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong,

Note.—The Valkyriur were female divinities, servants of Odin (or Wodin) in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies *choosers of the slain.* They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands, and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Valkalla, (the hall of Odin, or paradise of the brave,) where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale

* How quick they wheeled, and flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy shower. *Milt. Par. Reg.*

† The noise of battle hurtled in the air. *Shak. Jul. Cæs.*

Mista, black terrific maid!
  Sangrida and Hilda see,
Join the wayward work to aid;
  'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set
  Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
  Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
  Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
  Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
  Wading through the ensanguined field,
Gondula and Geira spread
  O'er the youthful king your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
  Ours to kill and ours to spare:
Spite of danger he shall live:
  (Weave the crimson web of war.)

They whom once the desert beach
  Pent within it's bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
  O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless earl is laid,
  Gored with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
  Soon a king shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Erin* weep,
  Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
  Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
  Clouds of carnage blot the sun:
Sisters! weave the web of death:
  Sisters! cease the work is done.

Hail the task and hail the hands!
  Songs of joy and triumph sing;
Joy to the victorious bands,
  Triumph to the younger king.

Mortal! thou that hear'st the tale
  Learn the tenor of our song;
Scotland through each winding vale
  Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters! hence with spurs of speed;
  Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed:
  Hurry, hurry to the field.

---

* Ireland.

ODE VIII.

THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

From the Norse-tongue.

To be found in Bartholinus, de causis contemnendæ mortis Hasniæ, 1689, Quarto.

Upreis Odinn Allda gautr, &c.

Up rose the king of men with speed,
And saddled straight his coal-black steed;
Down the yawning steep he rode
That leads to Hela's[*] drear abode.
Him the dog of darkness spied;
His shaggy throat he opened wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage filled,
Foam and human gore distilled:
Hoarse he brays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow and fangs that grin,
And long pursues with fruitless yell
The father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.

---

[*] Niflheimr, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old age, or by any other means than in battle; over it presided Hela the goddess of Death.

Right against the eastern gate,
By the moss-grown pile he sate,
Where long of yore to sleep was laid,
The dust of the prophetic maid.
Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the Runic rhyme,
Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead,
Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breathed a sullen sound.
PROPH. What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mouldering bones have beat
The winter's snows, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews and driving rain!
Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?
ODIN. A traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a warrior's son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,
For whom yon glittering board is spread,
Drest for whom yon golden bed?
PROPH. Mantling in the goblet see
The pure beverage of the bee,
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
'Tis the drink of Balder bold:

Balder's head to death is given;
Pain can reach the sons of Heaven!
Unwilling I my lips unclose:
Leave me, leave me to repose.
ODIN. Once again my call obey:
Prophetess arise, and say,
What dangers Odin's child await,
Who the author of his fate?
PROPH. In Hoder's hand the hero's doom;
His brother sends him to the tomb.
Now my weary lips I close;
Leave me, leave me to repose.
ODIN. Prophetess! my spell obey;
Once again arise, and say,
Who the avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt?
PROPH. In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace compress'd,
A wonderous boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven hair,
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam,
'Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
Flaming on the funeral pile.
Now my weary lips I close;
Leave me, leave me to repose.
ODIN. Yet a while my call obey:
Prophetess! awake, and say,
What virgins these, in speechless wo,
That bend to earth their solemn brow,

That their flaxen tresses tear,
And snowy veils that float in air?
Tell me whence their sorrows rose,
Then I leave thee to repose.
  PROPH. Ha! no traveller art thou;
King of men, I know thee now;
Mightiest of a mighty line——
  ODIN. No boding maid of skill divine
Art thou no prophetess of good,
But mother of the giant-brood!
  PROPH. Hie the hence, and boast at home,
That never shall inquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again
Till Lok* has burst his tenfold chain;
Never till substantial night
Has re-assumed her ancient right,
Till wrapped in flames, in ruin hurled,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

---

* Lok is the evil being, who continues in chains till the *twilight of the gods* approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, the sun, shall disappear, the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies; even Odin himself, and hisk indred deities, shall perish. For a farther explanation of this mythology, see *Introduction a l' Histoire de Danemarc, par Mons. Mallat.* 1755, 4to; or rather a translation of it published in 1770, and entitled *Northern Antiquities*, in which some mistakes in the original are judiciously corrected.

ODE IX.

THE TRIUMPH OF OWEN:

A Fragment.

From Mr. Evan's specimen of the Welsh poetry, London, 1764, Quarto.

ADVERTISEMENT.

OWEN succeeded his father Griffin in the principality of North Wales, A. D. 1120: this battle was near forty years afterwards.

OWEN'S praise demands my song;
Owen swift and Owen strong,
Fairest flower of Roderick's stem,
Gwyneth's* shield and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours,
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand and open heart.
Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three against him came;
This the force of Eirin hiding;
Side by side as proudly riding;
On her shadow long and gay
Lochlin† plows the watery way;

---

* North Wales.

† Denmark

There the Norman sails afar,
Catch the winds and join the war;
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burthens of the angry deep.
Dauntless on his native sands
The dragon son* of Mona stands;
In glittering arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest:
There the thundering strokes begin,
There the press and there the din,
Talymalfra's rocky shore
Echoing in the battle's roar.
Checked by the torrent-tide of blood,
Backward Meinai rolls his flood,
While, heaped his master's feet around,
Prostrate warriors gnaw the ground.
Where his glowing eyeballs turn,
Thousand banners round him burn;
Where he points his purple spear
Hasty, hasty rout is there;
Marking, with indignant eye,
Fear to stop and shame to fly:
There confusion, terror's child,
Conflict fierce and ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honourable death.

* * * * * *

---

* The red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.

ODE X.

THE DEATH OF HOEL.

From the Welsh of Aneurim, styled The Monarch of the Bards.

He flourished about the time of Taliessin, A. D. 570.
This Ode is extracted from the Gododin.

[See Mr. Evan's specimens, pp. 71, 73.]

Had I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage, and wild affright,
Upon Deïra's squadrons hurled,
To rush and sweep them from the world!
Too, too secure in youthful pride,
By them my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's son; of Madoc old,
He asked no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in nature's wealth arrayed,
He asked and had the lovely maid.
 To Cattraeth's vale, in glittering row,
Twice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link:
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.
Flushed with mirth and hope they burn,
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,

Save Aëron brave and Conan strong,
(Bursting through the bloody throng,)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall.

ODE XI.

(FOR MUSIC.)

Performed in the Senate-house, Cambridge, July 1st, 1769, at the installation of his Grace Augustus-Henry-Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, Chancellor of the University.

I.

"HENCE, avaunt! ('tis holy ground,)
Comus and his midnight crew,
And ignorance with looks profound,
And dreaming sloth of pallid hue,
Mad sedition's cry profane,
Servitude that hugs her chain,
Nor in these consecrated bowers,
Let painted flattery hide her serpent-train in flowers,
Nor envy base, nor creeping gain,
Dare the muse's walk to stain,
While bright-eyed science watches round:
Hence, away! 'tis holy ground."

II.

From yonder realms of empyrian day
Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay:

There sit the sainted sage, the bard divine,
The few whom genius gave to shine
Through every unborn age and undiscovered clime.
Rapt in celestial transport they,
Yet hither oft a glance from high
They send of tender sympathy
To bless the place where on their opening soul
First the genuine ardour stole.
'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,
And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

III.

"Ye brown o'er-arching groves!
That contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus lingers with delight,
Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn,
Oft wooed the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of folly,
With freedom by my side and soft-eyed melancholy."

IV.

But hark! the portals sound, in pacing forth,
With solemn steps and slow,
High potentates, and dames of royal birth,
And mitred fathers, in long order go:
Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow*
From haughty Gallia torn,

---

* Edward III. who added the *Fleur de lys* of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity-College.

And sad Chatillon,* on her bridal morn,
That wept her bleeding love; and princely Clare,†
And Anjou's heroine,‡ and the paler rose,§
The rival of her crown, and of her woes,
And either Henry‖ there,
The murdered saint, and the majestic lord,
That broke the bonds of Rome.
(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more,
Save charity, that glows beyond the tomb)
All that on Granta's fruitful plain
Rich streams of regal bounty poured,
And bade those awful fanes and turrets rise
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;
And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies:

---

[*] Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Comte de St. Paul in France, of whom tradition says that her husband, Audemarde de Valentia, earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the foundress of Pembroke-college or hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia.

[†] Elizabeth de Burg, countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward I. hence the poet gives her the epithet of princely. She founded Clare-hall.

[‡] Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. foundress of Queen's college. The poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in a former ode.

[§] Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward IV. (hence called the paler Rose, as being of the house of York.) She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou.

[‖] Henry VI. and VIII. the former the founder of King's, the atter the greatest benefactor to Trinity-college.

V.

" What is grandeur, what is power?
Heavier toil, superior pain,
What the bright reward we gain?
The grateful memory of the good.
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude."

VI.

Foremost, and leaning from her golden cloud,
The venerable Margaret* see!
" Welcome, my noble son!" she cries aloud,
" To this thy kindred train and me:
Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
A Tudor's† fire, a Beaufort's grace.
Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The flower unheeded shall descry,
And bid it round heaven's altars shed
The fragrance of its blushing head;
Shall raise from earth the latent gem
To glitter on the diadem.

---

* Countess of Richmond and Derby, the mother of Henry VII. foundress of St John's and Christ's colleges.

† The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor; hence the application of this line to the duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families.

VII.

"Lo! Granta waits to lead her blooming band;
Not obvious, not obtrusive, she
No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings,
Nor dares with courtly tongue refined
Profane thy inborn royalty of mind:
She reveres herself and thee.
With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow
The laureat wreath* that Cecil wore she brings,
And to thy just, thy gentle hand
Submits the fasces of her sway;
While spirits blest above, and men below,
Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.

VIII.

"Through the wild waves, as they roar,
With watchful eye, and dauntless mien,
Thy steady course of honour keep,
Nor fear the rock nor seek the shore:
The star of Brunswick smiles serene,
And gilds the horrors of the deep."

---

* Lord treasurer Burleigh was chancellor of the University in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

MISCELLANIES.

A LONG STORY.

Advertisement.

Mr. Gray's Elegy, previous to its publication, was handed about in MS. and had, amongst other admirers, the lady Cobham who resided in the mansion-house at Stoke-Pogeis. The performance inducing her to wish for the author's acquaintance, lady Schaub and Miss Speed, then at her house, undertook to introduce her to it. These two ladies waited upon the author at his aunt's solitary habitation, where he at that time resided, and not finding him at home, they left a card behind them. Mr. Gray, surprised at such a compliment, returned the visit; and as the beginning of this intercourse bore some appearance of romance, he gave the humorous and lively account of it which the Long Story contains.

In Britain's isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands ;*
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employed the power of fairy hands.

---

* The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogeis, then in possession of viscountess Cobham. The style of building which we now call queen Elizabeth's is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

To raise the ceilings fretted height,
Each pannel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave lord-keeper* led the brawls:
The seal and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's queen,
Though pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning,
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your history whither are you spinning?
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
A brace of warriors,† not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

---

* Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing.—Brawls were a sort of a figure-dance then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern cotillions, or still more modern quadrilles.

† The reader is already apprized who these ladies were; the two descriptions are prettily contrasted; and nothing can be more happily turned than the compliment to lady Cobham in the eighth stanza.

The first came *cap-à-pèe* from France,
Her conquering destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind Heaven
Had armed with spirit, wit, and satire;
But Cobham had the polish given,
And tipped her arrows with good-nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air—
Coarse panegyrics would but tease her;
Melissa is her *nom de guerre*;
Alas! who would not wish to please her!

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
And aprons long, they hid their armour,
And veiled their weapons bright and keen
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame in the shape of Mr. P—t,*
(By this time all the parish know it)
Had told that thereabouts there lurked
A wicked imp they called a poet.

---

* I have been told that this gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeased at the liberty here taken with his name, yet surely without any great reason.

Who prowled the country far and near,
Bewitched the children of the peasants,
Dryed up the cows and lamed the deer,
And sucked the eggs and killed the pheasants.

My lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The heroines undertook the task;
Through lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,
Rapped at the door, nor stayed to ask,
But bounce into the parlour entered.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle.
Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry scurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creased like dog's ears in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Conveyed him underneath their hoops
To a small closet in the garden.

So rumour says, (who will believe?)
But that they left the door a-jar,
Where safe, and laughing in his sleeve,
He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy; he little knew
The power of magic was no fable;
Out of the window wisk they flew,
But left a spell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
The poet felt a strange disorder;
Transparent birdlime formed the middle,
And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
The powerful pothooks did so move him,
That will he nill to the great house
He went as if the devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he preferred his case,
And begged his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have backed his quarrel:
But with a blush, on recollection,
Owned that his quiver and his laurel
'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was sat, the culprit there:
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping,
The lady Janes and Jones repair,
And from the gallery stand peeping;

Such as in silence of the night
Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
(Styack* has often seen the sight)
Or at the chapel-door stand sentry;

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnished,
Sour visages enough to scare ye,
High dames of honour once that garnished
The drawing-room of fierce queen Mary!

The peeress comes: the audience stare,
And doff their hats with due submission;
She courtesies, as she takes her chair,
To all the people of condition.

The bard with many an artful fib
Had in imagination fenced him,
Disproved the arguments of Squib,†
And all that Groom‡ could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him
When he the solemn hall had seen;
A sudden fit of ague shook him;
He stood as mute as poor Macleane.§

---

* The housekeeper.
† The steward.
‡ Groom of the chamber.
§ A famous highwayman, hanged the week before.

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
"How in the park, beneath an old tree,
(Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry,)

"He once or twice had penned a sonnet,
Yet hoped that he might save his bacon:
Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
He ne'er was for a conjurer taken."

The ghostly prudes, with hagged* face,
Already had condemned the sinner:
My lady rose and with a grace——
She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.†

"Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
Why, what can the viscountess mean!"
Cried the square hoods, in woful fidget;
"The times are altered quite and clean!

"Decorum's turned to mere civility!
Her air and all her manners show it:
Commend me to her affability!
Speak to a commoner and poet!"
[*Here* 500 *stanzas are lost.*]

---

* Hagged, *i, e.* the face of a witch or hag. The epithet *haggard* has been sometimes mistaken as conveying the same idea, but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk called a haggard.

† Here the story finishes; the exclamation of the ghosts, which follows, is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age when they are supposed to have lived; and the 500 stanzas said to be lost, may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expostulation.

And so God save our noble king,
And guard us from long-winded lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
And keep my lady from her rubbers.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curfew tolls* the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

*——squila di lontano
Che paia'l giorno pianger, che si muore,
Dante, Purgat. 1. 8.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure:
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth, e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud! impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery sooth the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire.
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstacy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll ;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton, here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone,
  Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
  And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
  To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
  With incense kindled at the muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,*
  Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
  They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones, from insult to protect
  Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncuoth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked
  Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
  The place of fame and elegy supply,
And many a holy text around she strews,
  That teach the rustic moralist to die.

---

* This part of the Elegy differs from the first copy. The following stanza was excluded with the other alterations:

Hark! how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
  Bids every fierce tumultuous pass on cease,
In still small accents whispering from the ground,
  A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
 E'en in our ashes* live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 "Oft have we seen him, at the peep of dawn,
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There, at the foot of yonder nodding beach,
 That wreaths its old fantastic root so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
 And pore upon the brook that bubbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
 Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove;
Now drooping, woful wan! like one forlorn,
 Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

* Ch'i veggio nel pensier, dolce mio fuoco,
Fredda una lingua, et due begli occhi chiuſi
Rimaner droppo noi pien difaville. *Petrarch, Son.* 169.

"One morn I missed him on the accustomed hill,
Along the heath,"[*] and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood, was he:

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array, [borne:
Slow through the churchway-path we saw him
Approach, and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."[†]

EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And melancholy marked him for her own.

[*] Mr. Gray forgot, when he displaced, by the preceding stanza, his beautiful description of the evening haunt, the reference to it which he had here left:

Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
While o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

[†] In the early editions the following lines were added, but the parenthesis was thought too long:

There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send ;
He gave to misery all he had, a tear ;
He gained from Heaven (it was all he wished) a friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose*)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

EPITAPH.

ON MRS. MARY CLARKE.†

Lo ! where this silent marble weeps,
A friend, a wife, a mother, sleeps ;
A heart, within whose sacred cell,
The peaceful virtues loved to dwell :
Affection warm, and faith sincere,
And soft humanity were there.
In agony, in death, resigned,
She felt the wound she left behind.
Her infant image here below
Sits smiling on a father's wo,

---

* —— Paventosa speme. *Petrarch*, *Son.*

† This lady, the wife of Dr. Clarke, physician at Epsom, died April 27th, 1757, and is buried in the church of Beckenham, Kent.

Whom what awaits while yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days?
A pang, to secret sorrow dear,
A sigh, an unavailing tear,
Till time shall every grief remove
With life, with memory, and with love.

TRANSLATION FROM STATIUS.

Third in the labours of the disc came on,
With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon;
Artful and strong he poised the well-known weight
By Phlegyas warned, and fired by Mnestheus' fate,
That to avoid, and this to emulate.
His vigorous arm he tried before he flung,
Braced all his nerves and every sinew strung,
Then with a tempest's whirl and wary eye
Pursued his cast, and hurled the orb on high;
The orb on high, tenacious of its course,
True to the mighty arm that gave it force,
Far overleaps all bound, and joys to see
Its ancient lord secure of victory:
The theatre's green height and woody wall
Tremble ere it precipitates its fall;
The ponderous mass sinks in the cleaving ground,
While vales and woods and echoing hills rebound.
As when from Ætna's smoking summit broke,
The eyeless Cyclops heaved the craggy rock,

Where ocean frets beneath the dashing oar,
And parting surges round the vessel roar ;
'Twas there he aimed the meditated harm,
And scarce Ulysses 'scaped his giant arm.
A tiger's pride the victor bore away,
With native spots and artful labour gay,
A shining border round the margin rolled,
And calmed the terrors of his claws in gold.
Cambridge, May 8th, 1736.

GRAY OF HIMSELF.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune,
He had not the method of making a fortune :
Could love and could hate, so was thought something odd ;
No very great wit, he believed in a God :
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townsend and Squire.

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